F1 2022 **Leclerc throws away crucial victory**

AUTOSPORT

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28 JULY 2022

GAME OVER?

Leclerc blunder hands French GP to title rival Verstappen

'I will believe in it to the end, but it doesn't look great'

63
POINTS BEHIND
10 RACES TO GO

PLUS PADDY HOPKIRK 1933-2022

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Ferrari and Leclerc now need a modern motorsport miracle

Charles Leclerc has been an undoubted star of the 2022 Formula 1 season and the biggest reasons behind his deficit to title rival Max Verstappen have concerned Ferrari reliability and strategy. But last weekend Leclerc made one of those fundamental errors we rarely see from the top drivers, costing him the French Grand Prix.

As Alex Kalinauckas shows in our report on page 14, Ferrari and Leclerc had performed brilliantly to offset Red Bull's straightline speed advantage at Paul Ricard. The race was finely poised – with both teams reckoning they could win it – when Leclerc lost the rear of his F1-75. As well as taking the sting out of the race, the moment has made the championship 'battle' look more mathematical than realistic.

Ferrari has proved it can compete for victories at almost every track and has provided some great action this year. Team boss Mattia Binotto says there's "no reason" why Ferrari can't win the last 10 races but its poor conversion rate of two victories from the last seven strong chances suggests that it won't. It's also hard to see Verstappen and Red Bull letting a 63-point lead slip through their fingers...

Nevertheless, the new ground-effects rules and tiny performance differences between the F1-75 and RB18 should mean we get to enjoy plenty more good races in 2022. The Hungaroring this weekend could also allow Ferrari to hit back before F1's summer break, when we hope to entertain you with some stories from motorsport's rich history.

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor
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NEXT WEEK
4 AUGUST

Hungarian GP and more
Reports from Formula 1, Formula E, British Touring Cars and the Spa 24 Hours

Have your say, get in touch

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F1 2022 Leclerc throws away crucial victory
AUTOSPORT
GAME OVER?
Leclerc blunder hands French GP to title rival Verstappen
63
PLUS PADDY HOPKIRK 1933-2022

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Carl Bingham/Motorsport Images

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FIA facing rebellion over 2023

FORMULA 1

The FIA looks set to face rebellion from half of the Formula 1 grid over its planned changes to the floor regulations next year in a bid to combat porpoising.

Ahead of the French Grand Prix weekend, the FIA announced a series of steps taken on safety grounds to stop cars from porpoising, a phenomenon encountered by many teams since the return of ground-effects for 2022. This included raising the floor edges by 25mm and raising the underfloor diffuser throat, as well as introducing more stringent checks to ensure teams were complying with the regulations.

But it has emerged that five teams — Red Bull, Ferrari, Alfa Romeo, Haas and Williams — are set to push back against the FIA amid doubts that it is still a genuine safety issue.

The regulations permit F1's governing body to make changes on safety grounds "without notice or delay", yet there is set to be pushback from teams at the upcoming Technical Advisory Committee meetings.

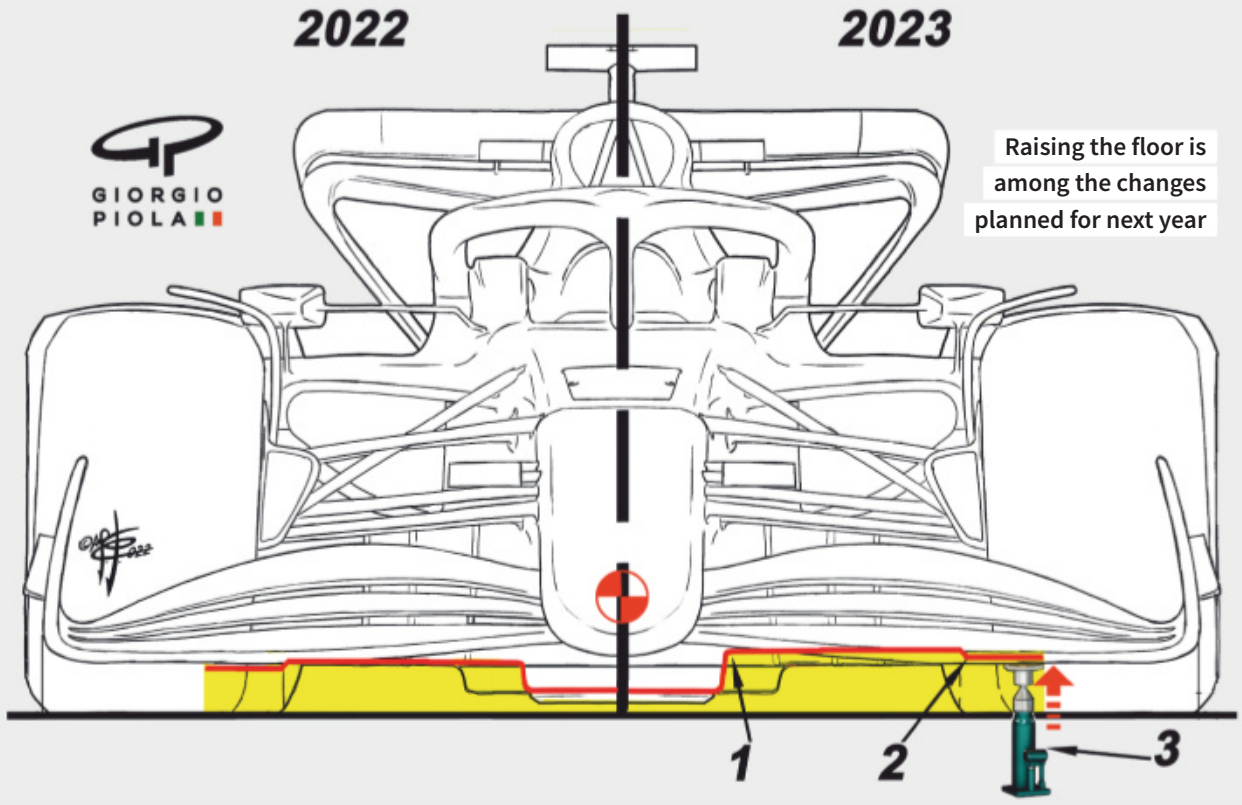
Sources with good knowledge of the situation have suggested that there is even support from eight teams — which would be enough for a 'super majority' rule change to be ratified through the normal F1 Commission processes — for a compromise solution that is a less extreme raising of the floor. It is suggested that teams could accept more minor tweaks — such as the floor edge being raised by around 10mm — as that would not require such a fundamental rethink of car designs at this late stage.

What is unclear is what avenues the teams have to fight the changes if the FIA stands firm and refuses to back down from its more extreme version.

One factor that cannot be completely ruled out is a veto from Ferrari, with the Italian squad having retained its right to block specific rule changes as part of the new Concorde Agreement that came into place from 2021. While it is thought unlikely the veto would be able to stop rule changes going through on genuine safety grounds, the debate over whether or not the changes fall under that remit means the situation is not crystal clear.

Red Bull F1 boss Christian Horner said the lobbying to change the rules for 2023 was all so a "certain team" could benefit, hinting at Mercedes, which some have suggested has overegged the safety issue at the heart of the floor row.

"I'd actually dispute it is a safety issue," said Horner. "It's down to a team how it chooses to operate its car. You can remove the porpoising very easily, but that's at the sacrifice of performance. Therefore, it's not the duty of the FIA to ensure that a team is competitive. Otherwise, we'd have had engine BoP [Balance of Performance]



Raising the floor is among the changes planned for next year

SUTTON

floor rules

over the last 10 years."

Horner warned the FIA should not overreact to an issue that he thought had not been a problem for any team at recent races, as well as stressing the impact it would have on smaller outfits that are already in the process of designing cars.

One additional concern Horner raised is that there is no definition from the FIA of what constitutes a safety matter, potentially allowing the issue to be pushed through.

But Mercedes F1 boss Toto Wolff was dismissive of Horner's complaints, saying Red Bull's chief was "just bored at the front" and that threats of further action were "just posturing". Mercedes trackside engineering director Andrew Shovlin added that the team did not think the "fundamental" safety issues would be achieved by leaving the rules alone, but was "certainly not of the position of saying regulation changes are definitely going to be in favour of Mercedes."

McLaren team principal Andreas Seidl called on the FIA to "not give way" and ensure it pushed through with the planned changes, while his technical director James Key stressed the need for clarity soon as teams start to shift attention to 2023.

"This is about as late as you'd want to get on long lead items, gearboxes, for example, and that sort of thing, which begin to mature quite heavily at this time of year," Key said. "It's pretty late to be understanding that. The sooner we know the final numbers, the better."

LUKE SMITH & JONATHAN NOBLE

ALONSO TO RETURN TO LE MANS WITH ALPINE?

LE MANS

JEP

Alpine plans to hand Fernando Alonso a drive with its LMDh programme that would see him return to the Le Mans 24 Hours once his Formula 1 career is over.

Alonso won Le Mans in 2018 and 2019 (above) with Toyota and has been clear about his desire to return to the French endurance classic. Alpine currently races in the World Endurance Championship with a grandfathered LMP1 car but will launch an LMDh programme from 2024.

Alpine boss Laurent Rossi revealed last week that talks about a future switch to the marque's LMDh squad were part of ongoing discussions surrounding a new F1 deal. "It's always been part of it, last year even when we were discussing for the renewal for this year," Rossi said. "We talked about the fact that Fernando is a legend of the sport, but also of the Renault Group. For us, he's the champion.

"He was always going to have a seat in LMDh the day he switches, he will be welcome, it's his team. We actually made that decision [to embark on the programme] also thinking about him."

Alonso's F1 contract is up at the end of the year, but the team expects him to sign a new deal while it explores loaning reserve driver Oscar Piastri to another squad.

LUKE SMITH

MAUGER

Verstappen's calendar warning

FORMULA 1

Max Verstappen has warned Formula 1 against replacing its traditional venues with a calendar of street races amid the uncertainty facing Spa.

The Belgian Grand Prix at the famous track (above) is facing the axe from the F1 calendar and is one of a number of traditional events under threat as series owner Liberty Media looks to expand into new territories.

In recent years, F1 has added more street venues to its calendar in Jeddah, Baku and Miami, while in 2024 a street event in Las Vegas will join the fray alongside mainstays Monaco and Singapore.

Verstappen said the thought of losing Spa was "sad" given it is his favourite track, and warned F1 against pursuing only street tracks. "I don't want to see myself in 2028 or whatever driving only on street circuits close to the city just for the fan engagement or whatever because you need these kinds of iconic tracks on the calendar," Verstappen said.

"I understand everyone wants to make money, but there is also a limit to that, because it's important to keep these really cool circuits on the calendar instead of just driving on street circuits, which I think F1 cars are not designed for anyway."

ADAM COOPER

Newgarden could miss crucial IndyCar round

LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Ferrucci could race for Penske following Newgarden's Iowa crash

LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

INDYCAR

Santino Ferrucci's IndyCar career is on the brink of a startling new twist, after getting a call from Team Penske to be on standby to replace Josef Newgarden for this weekend's race on the Indianapolis road course.

The possibility of Ferrucci landing one of the most coveted seats in motorsport arose because of Newgarden's heavy shunt last Sunday while dominating the race at Iowa Speedway for a second straight day. Newgarden was cleared by IndyCar Medical but his accelerometers registered a high enough g-number on impact that the series' protocol necessitated a re-evaluation before being allowed to return to the cockpit. The wisdom of having such protocols in place was proven when Newgarden later passed out, prompting a trip to hospital and an overnight stay for observation. He returned home to Nashville on Monday.

That same morning, Penske announced it had asked Ferrucci to be on standby to sub in its #2 car on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course this weekend, should Newgarden fail to be cleared by the medics on Thursday (today).

Were this to be the case, 24-year-old Ferrucci would be making his fourth IndyCar start of 2022 for a fourth different team. He subbed for Jack Harvey at Rahal Letterman Lanigan at Texas Motor Speedway after the Briton's heavy shunt in practice, and finished a superb ninth after starting near the back of the grid. He then drove for Dreyer & Reinbold Racing at the Indy 500, alongside Sage Karam as the local team expanded to two cars, and Ferrucci delivered a 10th-place finish. He then also stood in for Juncos Hollinger's Callum Ilott at Detroit, after the rookie injured his hand in a crash at the 500.

Failure to start this weekend would severely damage Newgarden's championship chances, since he lies 34 points behind leader Marcus Ericsson of Chip Ganassi Racing but only 10 points ahead of sixth-placed Alex Palou (also Ganassi). Even the last-placed finisher in a 26-car IndyCar field is guaranteed five points, and the likelihood of all five of Newgarden's championship opponents finishing outside the top 20 is remote. Thus a non-start would see Newgarden likely slip to sixth in the points race, with only four rounds to go.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

P30 INDYCAR REPORT

Dennis stays but Askew is under pressure

S BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

FORMULA E

The Andretti Formula E team is considering a replacement for Oliver Askew for next season, as owner Michael Andretti concedes that the American's season has been "frustrating".

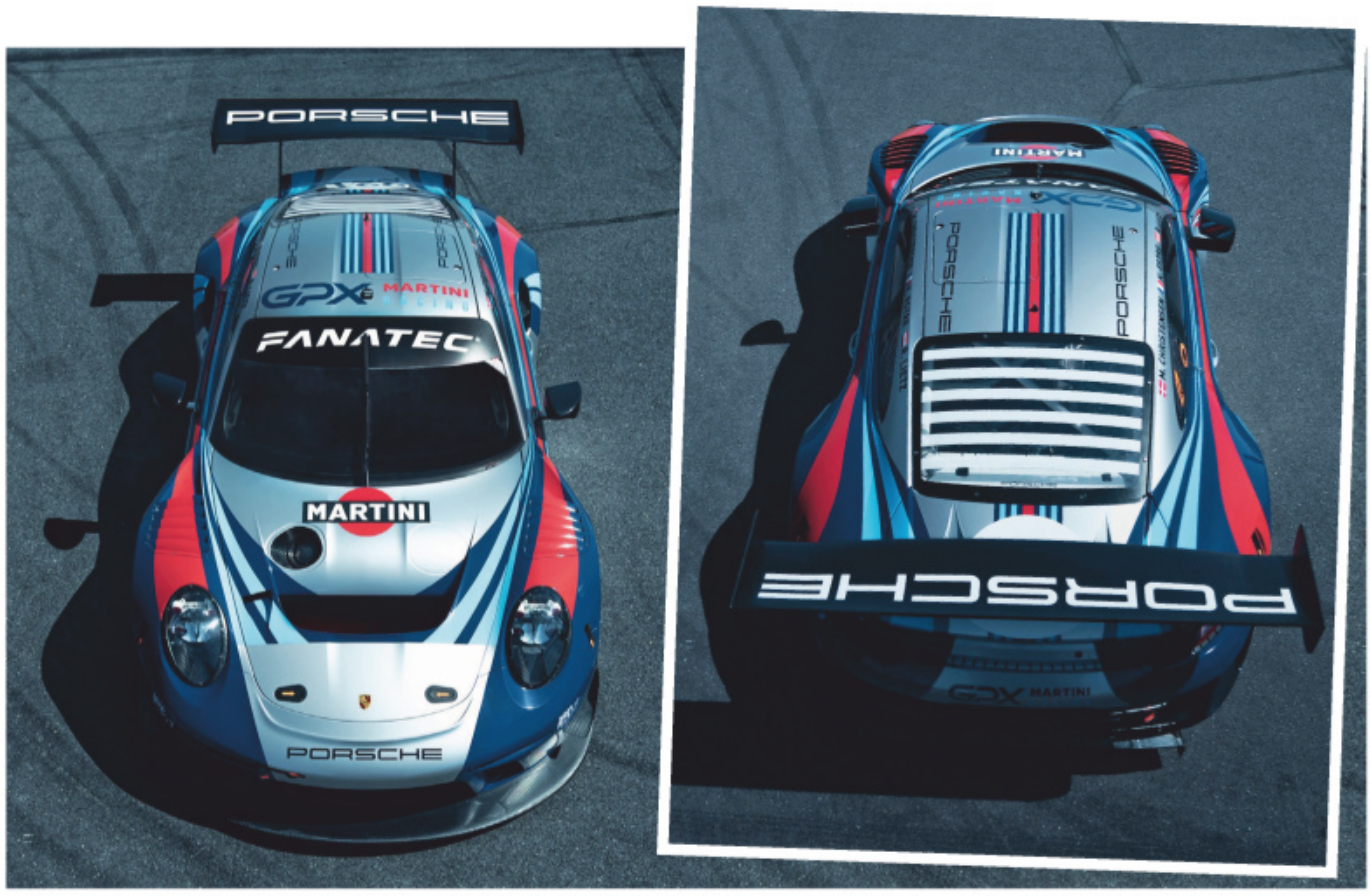
Askew had shown improved performance in qualifying at the Marrakech round earlier this month, when he made the duels for the first time, but a difficult New York City round continued his 11-race spell of failing to trouble the scorers.

"We're working on the second [seat] — we don't know what we'll do yet," said Andretti of the 25-year-old. "It's been a frustrating year for [Askew], I think we were all expecting a little more. I know he's a really smart kid. He drove for us in Indy Lights and won the championship there, and he was very quick in IndyCar.

"He's just been having a problem with this tyre and getting dialled in, especially for qualifying. In a race, his pace is good."

This comes as Andretti confirmed Jake Dennis would be continuing with the team for a third season. Dennis was a title contender in his rookie year but has found 2021-22 more difficult, after BMW canned its works support.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



SPA 24 HOURS The GPX Racing Porsche squad has adopted a new retro livery for its Spa 24 Hours challenger this weekend. The colours of the ART Grand Prix-run Porsche 911 GT3-R shared by Kevin Estre, Michael Christensen and Richard Lietz will mimic those of the Hans-Dieter Dechent's Salzburg team's 917LH driven by Vic Elford and Gerard Larrousse at the 1971 Le Mans 24 Hours. The line-up of Estre, Christensen and Lietz has been reformed for this year's GT World Challenge Europe blue riband three years after they won the race with a Porsche running a Gulf Oil colour scheme. **Photo by Ugo Missana**

First Lambo drivers revealed

WEC/IMSA

Mirko Bortolotti and Andrea Caldarelli are the first drivers to be named by Lamborghini for its new LMDh programme.

The stalwarts of the Italian manufacturer's GT roster will lead development of the hybrid prototype in conjunction with Ligier next year. They will then segue into race seats for Lamborghini's twin attacks on the World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship in 2024.

Lamborghini head of motorsport Giorgio Sanna said that the announcement of Bortolotti and Caldarelli "rewards their continued commitment to the Squadra Corse [Lamborghini's racing arm] family".

Bortolotti joined the factory line-up at Lamborghini in 2016 and claimed the overall 2017 Blancpain GT Championship (now known as the GT World Challenge Europe) sharing a Grasser Lamborghini Huracan GT3 with Christian Engelhart.

"I'm so happy to continue my career with Lamborghini and to start an exciting new chapter," said the 32-year-old Italian, who leads the DTM with Grasser this year.

Caldarelli, 32, became a factory driver in 2017. Two years later he claimed the overall GTWCE and Sprint Cup titles, as well as the BGTS Endurance Cup crown, together with Marco Mapelli at the wheel of a Huracan GT3 Evo run by FFF Racing.

"When I started racing for Lamborghini, I had the goal of fulfilling my childhood dream: to race with my favourite brand in the most prestigious endurance races," he said. "I'm excited about this new adventure."

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

HAMILTON PICKS ALONSO

Lewis Hamilton has raced a lot of great drivers over his 300 races to date in Formula 1 and reckons former McLaren team-mate Fernando Alonso is the best of the bunch. "I would say on pure pace, Fernando [is the toughest]," Hamilton said in France. "We had some good battles. I wish we could have more."

BRITS IN ASTON SPA ATTACK

Aston Martin World Endurance Championship drivers David Pittard and Charlie Fagg have been drafted into the Beechdean AMR squad for this weekend's Spa 24 Hours. They will race the team's second Aston Martin Vantage GT3 alongside Roman de Angelis and Theo Nouet in the GT World Challenge Europe round.

HANSON STAYS UNITED

Phil Hanson will partner Filipe Albuquerque at United Autosport for a fourth consecutive World Endurance Championship campaign in 2023 in a bid to repeat their 2019-20 LMP2 title. Josh Pierson has also been announced for what is planned as a two-car LMP2 assault next year.

LAMENTING PUKEKOHE LOSS

Three-time Supercars champion Scott McLaughlin says the closure of the Pukekohe Park circuit in his native New Zealand is "sad but inevitable". It was confirmed last week that motor racing activities at Pukekohe will cease as of next April, as owner Auckland Thoroughbred Racing looks to expand its horse training facilities.

SKODAS ON TOP IN ERC

Damiano De Tommaso took victory at last weekend's Rally di Roma Capitale, the latest round of the European Rally Championship. The Skoda Fabia Rally2 driver took command after leader Andrea Crugnola's Citroen C3 Rally2 hit throttle and power issues on the final day. Efren Llarena took a step closer to the title with fourth in his Skoda.

JEP

Paddy Hopkirk 1933-2022

OBITUARY

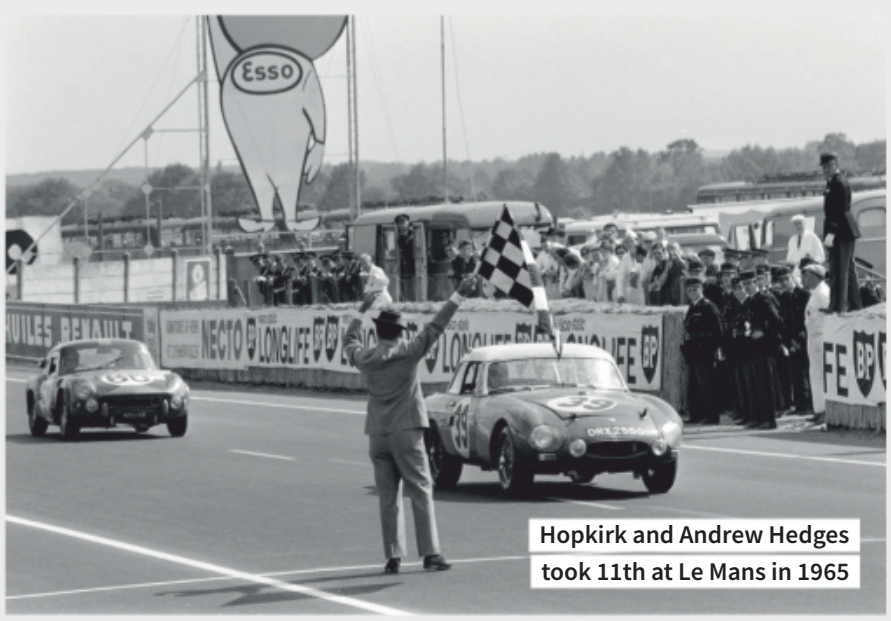
Paddy Hopkirk will forever be remembered as a rally legend and the man whose Monte Carlo Rally exploits helped transform him into a household name, and the Mini into a global icon.

The likeable, sharp-witted Northern Irishman, best known for his victory at the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally, died at Stoke Mandeville Hospital last Thursday, aged 89.

Belfast-born Hopkirk quickly developed a penchant for motorsport, dropping out of an engineering degree to pursue the passion. After initially dabbling in hillclimbs driving a Volkswagen Beetle, his first big break came in 1956 when the Standard Motor Company offered him a factory drive at the prestigious RAC Rally, that he would lead briefly before suffering mechanical issues.

A spell with the Rootes Group, driving a Hillman Husky and Sunbeam Rapier, followed before Hopkirk joined the British Motor Corporation in 1962, where he would later become synonymous with the Mini Cooper S. It was the 'David versus Goliath' feat to take the plucky 1071cc Mini to victory at the 1964 Monte that cemented his name into rally and British motorsport folklore.

Driving the #37 red Mini Cooper S with a white roof, alongside Henry Liddon, Hopkirk beat the more powerful 4.7-litre Ford



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Hopkirk and Andrew Hedges took 11th at Le Mans in 1965

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Pressing on during the 1965 RAC Rally

Fame came with victory on the 1964 Monte Carlo with Liddon and '33 EJB'

Falcon Sprint driven by Bo Ljungfeldt and Fergus Sager. "No one gave the classless Mini any chance against the bigger and more powerful cars — it was fantastic," said Hopkirk, when reflecting on the success earlier this year in an interview for *Mini Magazine* conducted by Nigel Death.

The win resulted in telegrams from then UK Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home and The Beatles. Such was the clamour surrounding Hopkirk's achievement that he appeared with the famous '33 EJB' Mini on hit television show *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, hosted by Bruce Forsyth.

Now British motorsport icons, Hopkirk and the Mini would conquer several major rallies, including the Austrian Alpine (1966), before triumphs in 1967 at the Circuit of Ireland (one of five victories on the event), and Acropolis and Alpine rallies. He would again enjoy victory with the car in 1982 when he came out of retirement to win the RAC Golden 50 Rally.

There was also success in the 1968 London to Sydney marathon as Hopkirk, joined by Alec Poole and Tony Nash, took a BMC Austin/Morris 1800 to second behind the Hillman Hunter of Andrew Cowan, Brian Coyle and Colin Malkin. The BMC trio gave up any chance of victory on the penultimate stage to rescue leader Lucien Bianchi after he collided head-on with another car on a road supposedly closed to traffic.

While Hopkirk made his name in rallying, he was also successful in circuit racing. He competed in the Sebring 12 Hours, Spa 24 Hours and the Le Mans 24 Hours, all in Rootes or BMC machines. He was also part of BMC's assault on the then Bathurst 500 touring car race at Mount Panorama, Australia, achieving a best result of sixth outright and third in class, driving a Cooper S alongside fellow rally driver Timo Makinen in 1965.

Hopkirk, who briefly dabbled in Formula Junior, was also a regular on the British Saloon Car Championship scene. Competing against then reigning Formula 1 world champion Graham Hill, Hopkirk finished the 1963 campaign sixth overall and second in class to fellow Mini driver John Whitmore.

His achievements behind the wheel of the Mini Cooper S earned Hopkirk a lifelong association with the brand. He became a Mini brand ambassador and was enlisted to help relaunch the manufacturer in 2001 following its acquisition by BMW. The marque would honour Hopkirk by creating a Paddy Hopkirk limited edition #37 Mini Cooper in 2020.

"Everyone at Mini is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Paddy Hopkirk MBE," read a tribute from the manufacturer. "Paddy was profoundly connected to the fabric and DNA of our company, following his iconic win at the Monte Carlo Rally in 1964. His triumph in the classic Morris Mini Cooper S Mk1 made this small car world-famous."

Hopkirk also helped inspire a new generation of rally stars, including Kris Meeke. The pair crossed paths early in Meeke's career, with Hopkirk a judge at a Peugeot-supported rally competition at Silverstone in 2000. Meeke would go on to earn a spot in the Peugeot 106 Cup before forging his own professional rally career, winning the 2009 Intercontinental Rally Challenge for the French manufacturer, then graduating to the World Rally Championship.

It was during his spell at Mini in 2011 when Hopkirk and Meeke's friendship would flourish. "The most engaging, fun, charismatic character I've ever had the privilege to be around," read a tribute from Meeke. "Thanks for all the advice and craic over the years."

Long after his retirement, Hopkirk earned a stream of honours. In 2010, alongside Timo Makinen, Rauno Aaltonen and Erik Carlsson, he was among the first inductees of the Rally Hall of Fame, an exhibition opened in Finland. Hopkirk's career achievements were also recognised by the state in the form of an MBE in 2016, and the following year he became president of the British Racing Drivers' Club, of which he was a loyal and active supporter after being made a life member in the 1960s.

"We thank Paddy for his dedication and love for the Club," said a statement from the BRDC. "On behalf of the Club we send our love and thoughts to his family at this difficult time."

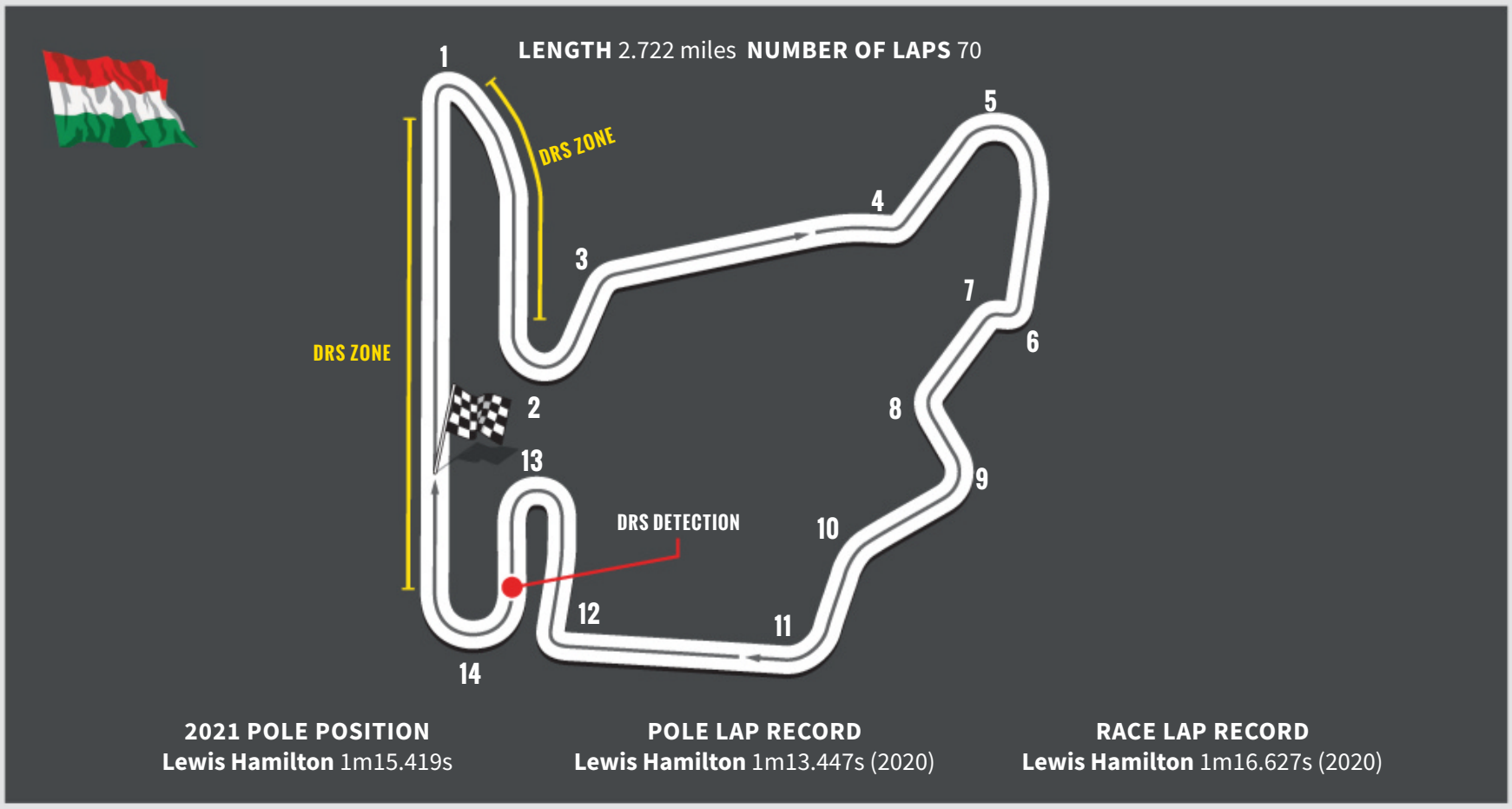
Hopkirk, who is survived by his wife Jennifer and children Katie, Patrick and William, will be sorely missed by his family and the motorsport fraternity. "First and foremost, Paddy was a loving husband, father and grandfather. His passing will leave a huge hole in the lives of those closest to him," said the Hopkirk family. "But Paddy also leaves an incredible legacy of motorsport and business success. His hard work in support of the British motorsport and wider car industry continued until his final days.

"His family, friends and fans will never forget his sharp wit and wicked smile. He brought fun and joy to anyone in his company and inspired many."

TOM HOWARD

ROUND 13/22

F1 HUNGARIAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

Friday 29 July
FP1 1300 **FP2** 1600

Saturday 30 July
FP3 1200
QUALIFYING 1500

Sunday 31 July
RACE 1400

CATCH THE RACE LIVE
SKY SPORTS F1
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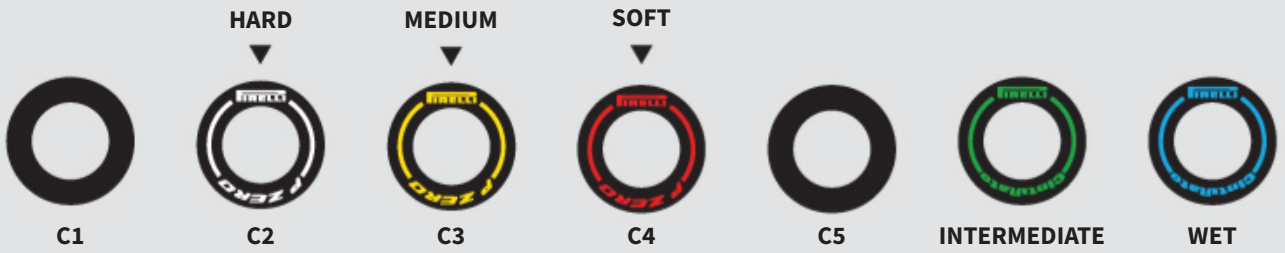

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	**Verstappen**	233
2	**Leclerc**	170
3	**Perez**	163
4	**Sainz**	144
5	**Russell**	143

Constructors

1	**Red Bull**	396
2	**Ferrari**	314
3	**Mercedes**	270
4	**Alpine**	93
5	**McLaren**	89

McLaren has dropped a place to fifth
SUTTON

RACE STATS

Previous winners

2021	**Esteban Ocon**	Alpine
2020	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2019	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2018	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2017	**Sebastian Vettel**	Ferrari
2016	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2015	**Sebastian Vettel**	Ferrari
2014	**Daniel Ricciardo**	Red Bull
2013	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2012	**Lewis Hamilton**	McLaren

Damon Hill came agonisingly close to winning the 1997 race with Arrows-Yamaha
ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Hungaroring points tallies

Hamilton	240
Vettel	169
Alonso	137
Ricciardo	71
Verstappen	71
Bottas	50
Sainz	39
Gasly	27
Ocon	27
Leclerc	12

Red Bull's last weakness?

Max Verstappen refuses to get carried away despite the gaping lead Charles Leclerc's French GP error has gifted him. But there might well be good reason

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Elite sportspeople don't think like the rest of us. The Olympic triple jumper favourite for gold unable to look at the silver they ultimately received. The quarterback picked in the lower rounds of the NFL draft motivated more to beat teams that passed on them. Formula 1 drivers are the same. The best take it even further.

Max Verstappen's reaction to winning the French Grand Prix amid Ferrari and Charles Leclerc's latest implosion demonstrated this well. The radio messages to/from his Red Bull squad after taking the flag were… businesslike. This is an operation for which winning is the expectation and losing is incomprehensible. It's been like this for so long — even during Red Bull's fallow years, it could threaten Mercedes with slick strategies and smooth race operations (2016 Monaco GP pitstop shambles notably aside).

Verstappen's calm victory reaction continued into the post-race press conference at Paul Ricard. He arrived a long time before Mercedes team-mates Lewis Hamilton and George Russell, with whom he had shared the podium. Given they'd all been speaking to the TV crews after receiving their trophies, this reflected both how simple Verstappen's race had been after Leclerc had binned his F1-75 and how pleased the Silver Arrows drivers were with their results. As he sipped his can of Red Bull, Verstappen explained how the late-race virtual safety car system failure had manifested itself in the cockpit. He was happy, sure, but far from exuberant.

> **"It's boring to hear drivers talk about taking things one race at a time, but it's a wise move"**

And this was a driver who had just secured a 63-point lead over Leclerc — the biggest gap between them of the season so far. It beats the 49 Verstappen had been ahead of Leclerc after winning in Canada and the 46 Leclerc had led Verstappen by (with Russell actually second, 34 points behind) after his Australia domination that feels a very long time ago now…

The calmness at Red Bull reflects the focus at the top level. It's boring to hear drivers and teams talk about taking things one race at a time, but it's a wise psychological move to avoid complacency and minimise mistakes. Verstappen has form in this area. Heading into the final races of 2021, he spoke of his life "not changing" if his first title fight was lost. Intriguingly, that risked an element of complacency creeping in for those that supported Verstappen, but it also showed how he refuses to give rivals any potential edge.

The 24-year-old can't be described as open with anyone outside the Red Bull camp — he's far too canny and sensible. But he's unafraid to front up to weaknesses or failures. That's particularly evident when his team does err, such as with its malfunctioning DRS in Spain. The RB18 is another brilliant creation from Adrian Newey and co. But it still does have one standout weakness. With the majority of 2022 now in the books, Ferrari clearly has superior pace over one lap — leading as it does 8-4 in the pole tally.

"We know that we have to find — especially over one lap — quite a bit of performance," Verstappen said in response to Autosport's question, once the Mercedes drivers had arrived for the press conference (Hamilton carrying ice pops he then shared with Russell), regarding the pressure on Red Bull in qualifying.

The issue still stems from the RB18's remaining excess weight, which is felt most at low fuel. But there is also the understeer the 2022 front tyres induce in the slow corners, which wrecks the balance Verstappen is after. This was made even trickier at Paul Ricard, with Red Bull running its low-drag rear wing package in a bid to negate Ferrari's continuing corner-speed advantage.

Ferrari generally qualifying ahead naturally creates knock-on problems for Red Bull and is why Mattia Binotto insists "there is no reason why not to win 10 races from now to the end". The red cars should therefore be considered pretty overwhelming favourites heading to Hungary this weekend, where the Budapest layout rewards high-downforce packages and makes passing difficult.

Its tyre wear progress since its Imola and Miami defeats has now been confirmed — just look at how fast Carlos Sainz was on ageing mediums late on at Paul Ricard (with the caveat that he was on a strategy offset to the rest and Verstappen wasn't under pressure up front). Ferrari's pinpointed upgrade plan, with its forward floor reprofiled last weekend, seems to be working nicely.

Pre-crash, Leclerc had also forced his rival to lose his tyre edge and start slipping off-track — the balance swinging in Ferrari's favour in the tyre consideration even though Red Bull's aggressive stop had secured Verstappen track position. It will never be known if Leclerc could have used a tyre life offset advantage to overcome Red Bull's fearsome top speed.

Catastrophic driver errors aside, it doesn't appear as if Ferrari can fix its in-race decisiveness weakness. But the added risk right now for Red Bull is that it *might* and suddenly secures a success string leading from poles that negates Verstappen's advantage.

That feels like it's verging on the preposterous, but then even Red Bull couldn't have predicted the Abu Dhabi saga swing that secured Verstappen's 2021 title.

No wonder he's not getting carried away.

P14 FRENCH GP REPORT

A strange way to make a stand

The manner in which Cyan Racing withdrew its five Lynk & Cos immediately before the two WTCR races at Vallelunga, citing tyre safety concerns, was perplexing

DAMIEN SMITH

The last time the World Touring Car Cup was thrown into Goodyear tyre safety turmoil, just two months ago at the Nurburgring, we were at pains to stress it was nothing like the Indianapolis 2005 Formula 1 farrago. This time, on the short circuit at Vallelunga last weekend, the parallels were admittedly closer, largely because Cyan Racing chose to withdraw its armada of five Lynk & Cos only at the end of the races' formation laps, slinking back to the pits as the rest lined up on the grid to take the start. So, just like the Michelin runners at Indy 17 years ago? Well no, not really.

Cyan knew it was in trouble from the test on Friday, at a venue new to the WTCR. Ballasted by 40kg of compensation weight for a total mass of 1355kg, the Lynk & Cos were by far the heaviest of the five makes of car, a hefty 80kg over Mikel Azcona's 'weightless' Hyundai. So far, so WTCR. But now Cyan claimed its drivers couldn't complete a race distance on Goodyear's apparently frail rubber. Those fears were compounded on Saturday morning when Yvan Muller went straight on at nearly 140mph at Turn 2, following a left-front failure. Mercifully, the gravel trap is long and the barriers distant. He only just nudged them.

As track temperatures topped 60C in qualifying, the Lynk & Cos were off the pace — although, because double champion Yann Ehrlacher and title rival Santi Urrutia qualified 10th and ninth respectively, they'd locked out the front row for the partially reversed-grid race two. But now Cyan upped the stakes, by releasing a ballistic statement. "The current assessment of Cyan Racing is that the weight levels and supplied tyres make for an impossible equation for the team to drive a full race distance in a safe manner," it read. Short runs were OK, which is why the team took part in qualifying. "However, Cyan Racing calls for the FIA WTCR stakeholders to take immediate and necessary actions, so that the team and its drivers can take part in the WTCR races at Vallelunga in a safe manner. The team will take a final decision on whether to take part in the two races on Sunday pending further action from the championship stakeholders."

> **"What really puzzled was why Cyan chose such a defiantly aggressive approach"**

In other words, give Cyan a rules break or else an already light 16-car grid would be down to 11. It was an ultimatum played on the safety card, and there was no going back. But when has holding a proverbial gun to the head of the FIA ever ended happily? Did they really expect the FIA to change its own regulations mid-event? Even if it did (which was never going to happen — see Indy 2005), what sort of precedent would that have set? How would the rival teams and manufacturers have responded? And, while Cyan insisted this was a safety matter, a nagging thought occurred: was this just a ploy to gain back performance? Muller had complained about BoP fairness to Autosport just last week. But Lynk & Co has been a part of WTCR since 2019, Cyan knows form can yo-yo meeting to meeting. Why not run the cars to a conservative set-up to ensure driver safety and bag points in a thin field? Overtaking is tough at Vallelunga. Even lacking straightline pace, Ehrlacher and Urrutia might have managed decent scores in race two. As it is, they have fallen from fierce title contenders to rank outsiders in one tempestuous weekend they'll never forget.

But what really puzzled was why Cyan chose such a defiantly aggressive approach to the withdrawal. Pulling the plug on Sunday morning, on the grounds of safety, would have been one thing. To keep everyone hanging on tenterhooks, including it seems their own drivers, then making the call on the radio during the formation lap, just seemed a vindictive act towards a series that is already at a low ebb, given the low grid numbers and uncertainty over the rest of the 2022 schedule. Back at Indy in 2005, Michelin categorically admitted its tyres were not safe, but its teams felt compelled to at least line up for fear of financial, legal and regulation-breaking reprisals. That wasn't the case here. How this call became public knowledge, the damning statement pinging in just as the rest lined up on the grid, was unnecessary. It smacked of melodrama.

How the WTCR and Cyan Lynk & Co can come back from such toxicity is another question. As for Goodyear, questions remain how closely WTCR teams follow its guidelines (which are not enforced by regulation) on tyre pressure and cambers — although Cyan did claim it adhered to the "recommended operating window from the official tyre supplier". But on a weekend when the other teams suffered a spate of worrying punctures in the races, and there were dramas on the brand's entirely different treaded rubber in the ETCR that ran on the same bill, it doesn't look great for Goodyear. It must and will investigate, then react, just as it did in the wake of the Nurburgring troubles. The famous old tyre company is vastly experienced at supplying spec tyres, at much higher performance levels than TCR touring cars. So it's a puzzler. Much the same can be said for Cyan Lynk & Co's choice of bridge-burning tactics in the paddock. What a weird weekend.

P36 WTCR REPORT

YOUR SAY

When he learned of his illness he booked Raceworld and set pole position, won his heats, set fastest lap and won outright

BILL WILLIAMS AND DAVID BRABHAM

Sad loss announced

It is with great sadness that we have to tell you that Gideon Williams passed away peacefully on 14 July. He had been suffering from motor neurone disease since 2018.

Some of you will remember Gideon from his days at Richard Lloyd Racing, when he was a mechanic for several years towards the end of Group C era, and some will remember him from his karting. Gideon competed each year we held the Autosport International Celebrity kart events and was a regular at Thruxton Kart Centre or Raceworld in Exeter.

When he learned of his illness he booked Raceworld and set pole position, won his heats, set fastest lap and won outright. A year later he could not steer the kart out of the pitlane!

Gideon asked Bill [his brother] if he would hold an annual kart race in his memory, but he only agreed provided Gideon made it to the first event. Last year Racing4Charity organised Karting4MND to raise funds for the MND Association.

Held at Thruxton on Thursday 26 August 2021, the event raised over £15,000 for the charity and we awarded two trophies: the Gideon Williams Trophy to the winner, for which Gideon donated his race helmet to become the trophy, and the Neil Cunningham Memorial Trophy to the fastest race lap holder.

Gideon was a keen supporter of all things that have engines and race — F1 and Formula E were his go-to favourites. Nico Rosberg sent Gideon a message of encouragement last year and we at Racing4charity would like to thank everyone at Autosport and the racing community for your messages of condolences to Gideon and his family. He leaves behind his wife, Ann, his two sons Jack and Alex and his daughter Natalie.

RIP old mate, we will miss you.

Bill Williams and David Brabham

PS. Please come and support the Gideon Williams Memorial Trophy at Thruxton Kart Centre, Thursday 25 August 2022.

Clever, but not racing?

With reference to the 1981 Spanish GP (Gilles Villeneuve's greatest F1 races, 23 June). Yours is the second publication I have read that has rated it as outstanding. It was the worst GP I ever watched — even worse than the Indianapolis tyre fiasco. Lap after lap of faster cars following the Ferrari like a queue behind a tractor. Clever it might have been, but racing it was not.

Mark Bennett
Hereford

READERS RESPOND

Following our request to name the fourth man pictured at a 1978 British Grand Prix autograph session (From the Archive, 16 June; Your Say, 7 July) we received the following from Alan Myers: "The mystery companion on the right is Tony Williams who was the pilot (and champion) of the inshore powerboat that Ronnie, Mario and James are sitting on. I was PR manager at Olympus Cameras at the time — I was holding back the crowd with my feet on the powerboat trailer and linking arms with colleagues and pushing back on the crowd completely horizontal! The drivers survived, but the pressure on the boat's plywood construction cracked the hull — an expensive autograph session!" Thanks again to all those who responded.

Have your say, get in touch

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RACE CENTRE

Standing tall: Verstappen now has a 63-point advantage over Leclerc

FORMULA 1

LECLERC ERROR HANDS VERSTAPPEN A BIG WIN

The two rivals were putting on another fine duel when the Ferrari star threw it all away and handed Red Bull the French GP

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Leclerc leads easily from pole, although Verstappen is preparing to turn up the pressure

"Noooo!" The anguish in Charles Leclerc's scream of frustration as he switched his Ferrari off for the second time while stuck in the Beausset barriers was one of a racer knowing their big chance is slipping away.

Since his Imola off chasing Sergio Perez, pretty much all of Leclerc's shocking 2022 misfortune had been out of his hands. But his spin on lap 18 of last weekend's French Grand Prix, ultimately won by Max Verstappen, was all his own doing. And he knew it. Leclerc was alone when everything went so horribly wrong for him at Paul Ricard. Afterwards, he typically fronted up to his own error.

In the moment that mattered most, he was adapting to a suddenly changing race situation — reacting to Red Bull's attempt to get the previously pursuing Verstappen ahead. Leclerc turned for Beausset from the wide line the Ferrari drivers had been using all weekend. It took him *very* close to the edge of the track as it had done 17 times before on Sunday. And then, the rears couldn't take it.

Around went Leclerc — a 360-degree spin ending just as he went straight on into the barriers. There he couldn't get his F1-75 into reverse because of "something with the clutch not working", even after shutting it down and refiring. He turned it off for good and roared.

It wasn't just that Leclerc's crash and Verstappen's victory meant the Dutchman left France with a 63-point standings lead after two races of having his advantage trimmed. It was that for the sixth time out of seven races since his Miami defeat, Leclerc had lost a genuine victory shot. Only his Austria triumph pricked that timespan and such a return really doesn't make a successful title challenge.

Thinking back to Miami in May is important in understanding how things played out as they did at Paul Ricard. The circumstances in no way absolve Leclerc of blame, but do explain how he came to make such a costly error.

For a start, Ferrari and Red Bull had been approaching the weekend with very different set-up philosophies. The Scuderia was keen to avoid being defeated as it had been in America — being undone again by inferior tyre wear in sun-baked conditions. It duly stuck with a bigger rear wing and so was gaining around 6mph in the high-speed turns in practice, while also warming up its front tyres better and keeping the rears in shape with reduced sliding over a qualifying flier. Over a stint, Ferrari's extra downforce (boosted by its forward floor reprofiling for this event) was also aimed at reducing low-speed understeer and so helping tyre life at a front-limited track.

Red Bull, meanwhile, was allying the potent punch of its rebadged Honda engine with its low-drag aerodynamic profile. This was to try to negate Ferrari's corner-speed advantage in qualifying and then keep Verstappen safe from straightline attack if he got pole. When he didn't, the straightline advantage would keep him in DRS range and force Leclerc to eat up his tyres pushing in the corners *a la* Miami. It would also aid defending if Verstappen managed to get ahead, but all the while would require careful steering inputs in the high-speed turns.

When Leclerc had easily led away from pole, Verstappen had been under greater pressure from the fast-starting Lewis Hamilton before the Red Bull driver braked latest of all three leaders for Turn 1. That got him close to Leclerc, but never enough to threaten the Monegasque's

lead and so the season's dominant pair shot clear of the Mercedes in tandem on lap one of 53. At the end of that tour, Leclerc's lead was 1.1 seconds. He increased that to 1.3s the next time around, but Verstappen got close enough on lap three that he could use freshly activated DRS to pull firmly within the critical window and stay there.

At the earliest opportunity, the pressure was on Leclerc. The pair exchanged then fastest laps in the low 1m38s before the pace slipped away slightly — all while Verstappen remained at a maximum of 0.8s behind for the next five laps, during which he got to 0.6s behind at the end of lap seven and had a real go attacking at Beausset.

The pressure seemed to be working as many had expected pre-race. Leclerc's rear was sliding and he was struggling to stay on the road through the high-speed Turns 3/4 chicane and at the subsequent quick left-right complex midway down the Mistral straight. But from there, the gap began to creep up. Verstappen was suddenly the one sliding more —going fully off-track at the tricky Turn 6 right that feeds into the Turn 7 kink and the straight beyond on lap nine. This earned him a track limits violation warning from engineer Gianpiero Lambiase, to which he replied: "Tyres are just hot — I'm really stuck here."

Over the next six laps, Leclerc's advantage stretched out to 1.8s as Verstappen continued to struggle at Turn 6, after which Red Bull called Verstappen in — although only if Leclerc stayed out. After a typically swish turnaround (2.4s), Verstappen was on his way armed with fresh hards and Leclerc seemingly snookered given the undercut's considerable power here. "By halfway around the [out-] lap, he had track position," said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner.

Ferrari reacted decisively to Verstappen's stop, with Leclerc's engineer Xavier Marcos Padros quickly telling him the team "confirmed" the Plan B it had been mulling a few laps earlier. This would involve eking out a tyre-life offset against Verstappen, with which Leclerc would be forced to make a race-winning pass in the second stint that never came.

Red Bull had come into the race "leaning towards two stops", per Horner. But several factors added up to mean it and Ferrari were set to only make one — albeit at different stages. The first was that the medium tyres all the leaders had started on were holding up "better than expected in these [hot] conditions", according to Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola. This was down to the track gripping up with additional support series rubber going down compared to its FP2 state. There, Ferrari had been a shocking near half-second off Verstappen's long-run pace average on the same compound.

Set-up choices to reduce the slow-speed understeer also minimised the strain on the left-fronts — critical at this venue. And Leclerc insisted after qualifying that his FP3 long run work on the hards had confirmed Ferrari's overnight data-crunching efforts had resulted in a "significant step up in performance" on race pace.

The other critical factor in the lead fight strategy was the FIA's decision to effectively lengthen the pitlane compared to the last three races here by moving the limiter release point to be level with the »

"RED BULL WAS ALLYING THE PUNCH OF ITS REBADGED HONDA ENGINE WITH ITS LOW-DRAG AERO PROFILE"

Leclerc loses the rear, does a 360 and parks the nose of his Ferrari in the barrier
BINGHAM
No hiding Leclerc's anguish as a victory thrown away sinks in
BINGHAM

furthest point of the track's last pit complex building. This had been done as the previous position was ahead of several garages the F1 organisation had been using over the weekend — at one point holding the 1922 Aston Martin 'Green Pea' Sebastian Vettel had driven last Thursday — and the officials were worried. The fear was that a suddenly accelerating car could be spun towards the garages and potentially injure those working nearby.

The pitlane exit speed line repositioning added an extra 6-7s, enough, said Verstappen, to reduce "opportunities in terms of racing" as "a two-stop was just slower because of the length of the pitlane".

It was ultimately academic, but with the lead fight poised on a knife-edge one and a half laps after Verstappen came in both leading teams claimed to be in the ascendency. "I stayed in his DRS for quite a while, but around here even driving on your own the tyres are already getting really hot," said Verstappen. "That's why he pulled away a little bit."

Horner explained: "Unfortunately we couldn't get close enough through Turn 6 onto the straight to really capitalise on the DRS [early on]. Therefore, that's why we banked the track position [by stopping first]. The second half of the race would have been the opposite of the first. Where we would have had track position, Ferrari would have had a slightly younger tyre advantage."

Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto insisted that his squad "had an edge on the Red Bull in terms of tyre degradation". This was even though Leclerc's front left that had blistered in what Isola calls "the first time we've seen this kind of blistering" in F1's 18-inch wheel era. "Looking at the time where Max stopped," Binotto continued, "he was starting suffering from tyre degradation. Charles was gaining two or three tenths per lap on him."

The evidence rather supports Ferrari's claims. Isola stated that "the blistering was not effecting" Leclerc's lap times and indeed he was going metronomically in the high 1m38s in the laps before he crashed.

When Ferrari had asked Leclerc for a front wing flap adjustment assessment for whenever he would stop, he proclaimed it was "OK like this" — happy enough with the balance to execute his team's tyre management plan. Verstappen, however, had his left-front "giving up", so need "a little more front wing" at his service. He'd also had to be warned by Lambiase to "watch that steering input in the high-speed, as we've been through".

But even if things were "under control" on tyre wear according to Leclerc, as he immediately acknowledged, "probably not enough because I went off and put the car in the wall". The differing downforce levels, the tension of the early exchanges and the state of Leclerc's tyres thereafter, plus Red Bull applying additional pressure through an aggressive strategy call — "it was the earliest that we felt was on the limit for the one-stop", per Horner — all led to Leclerc's crash.

"It's been a very tricky balance all the weekend," he said of his car performance just before he crashed, when he'd just been asked to preserve his ageing mediums, which had already been tortured plenty with that early rear sliding. "I like to have oversteer, but whenever there is heat it makes it difficult to be consistent. I've not been very consistent and I've paid the price of doing one big mistake during the race."

The safety car was called to cover Leclerc's car finally being extracted from the Beausset barriers. This presented a moment of danger for Verstappen, as the four cars ahead that had yet to stop would gain 11sin pitstop time if they pitted immediately. Hamilton and the rest duly did so to likewise take hards, but Verstappen was able to get ahead of his former title foe before the second safety car line. When the race restarted on lap 21, Verstappen nailed the restart — already 0.9s clear by the time they were back up to racing speed.

"He was just so fast," said Hamilton, who came home 10.6s behind Verstappen — the pair unruffled to the flag, other than having to negotiate the virtual safety car period that followed Zhou Guanyu stopping in the Turn 6 runoff with an engine issue on Verstappen's 49th lap. Although this was ultimately elongated, there was no sense in either stopping. "I was kind of keeping with him for like two laps and then... But literally I'm full gas down the straight and he's pulling away. If I pushed any more maybe I wouldn't have seen the end of the race."

The main reason why Hamilton also had a simple race to the finish

"I'VE NOT BEEN VERY CONSISTENT AND I'VE PAID THE PRICE OF DOING ONE BIG MISTAKE DURING THE RACE"

Red Bull had been "leaning towards two stops", but one was sufficient for Verstappen

TEE

Despite 19th-place starting slot, fifth was a poor reward for flying Sainz

MAUGER

behind the dominant new leader was because of the fluctuating fate of the other Red Bull. Perez, having had Hamilton rocket by at the start, had pressured the Mercedes early on before falling back to a 3.1s deficit by the time of Leclerc's crash.

He was struggling "a little more this weekend with deg than we've seen previously", reckoned Horner. Perez felt this was being caused by him "struggling with the full balance" through corner exits, so hurting his rear tyres in addition to the demands on the fronts.

For the nine laps after the restart, Perez was still able to comfortably run clear of George Russell in the second Mercedes — the Briton having immediately cleared Lando Norris with a swooping move at the race's first corner and soon clearing the fast-starting Fernando Alonso too. But then Perez's pursuer became Carlos Sainz.

The second Ferrari had started 19th because of its new engine being fitted for Saturday's running and had steadily worked its way up to ninth by the safety car. Sainz had started on the hards, which provided Ferrari with data to feed to Leclerc and gave him a contra-strategy to attack on the mediums when on low fuel later. That was ruined by the safety car, as it meant Sainz was far from certain to take the mediums 35 laps to the finish. Plus, while getting them, Sainz had been saddled with a five-second time addition after he was released into Alex Albon's path having had his right-front wheelnut needing checking.

Sainz nevertheless repassed Daniel Ricciardo into Turn 1 at the restart, then got Norris seven corners later and Fernando Alonso on the next lap. Sainz pursued Russell for eight tours before getting a great run onto the second half of the Mistral straight and then pulling off a stunning around-the-outside move through the rapid Signes right.

After this, he chomped into Perez's advantage — reducing it from 2.6s to 0.8s in six laps. As he was doing so, Ferrari was, per Binotto, "trying to extend his stint as much as possible to have the best [assessment of] the tyre's life".

Both team and driver dithered on whether to come in or not, but Ferrari's decision to ask engineer Riccardo Adami to call Sainz in on lap 41 — just as he was harassing Perez on the outside of the long Turn 13 right before finally getting ahead with a neat lunge at the final corner — was baffling. Then, even more bizarrely, Ferrari insisted he stop at the end of the following tour. This all but ensured a fifth-place finish as, even though Sainz was coming back towards the podium by 1.9s each »

QUALIFYING

SUTTON

"We've received quite a lot of criticism on the strategy front and I think it's a bit unfair." So said Carlos Sainz after he'd finished ninth in French Grand Prix qualifying – that history book result doing nothing for the story of a captivating Q3. The Spaniard's defence of his Ferrari squad's at times shambolic race strategy calls in 2022 may have been rather misplaced, but the Scuderia nailed its Paul Ricard qualifying plan.

Knowing Sainz would be dropped from wherever he ended up due to the grid penalty stemming from replacing the engine that blew so spectacularly in Austria, Ferrari established that "the plan for the whole weekend", per Sainz, was for him to aid Charles Leclerc against the Red Bulls.

It was already set to be a fascinating battle. With Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez running skinnier wing profiles, down on drag and at the top of every qualifying top-speed measurement (by 6mph over Leclerc at the speed trap alone), the question was whether this was enough to overhaul Ferrari's advantage in high-speed turns. This was clocked at 6mph at the Beausset hairpin in FP2 per GPS traces Autosport viewed, but that was with Ferrari seemingly in a higher-engine mode. With everything turned up on each car and all the fuel out, the F1-75's extra downforce from its bigger rear wing would help switch its tyres on for sector one and keep them alive come the end.

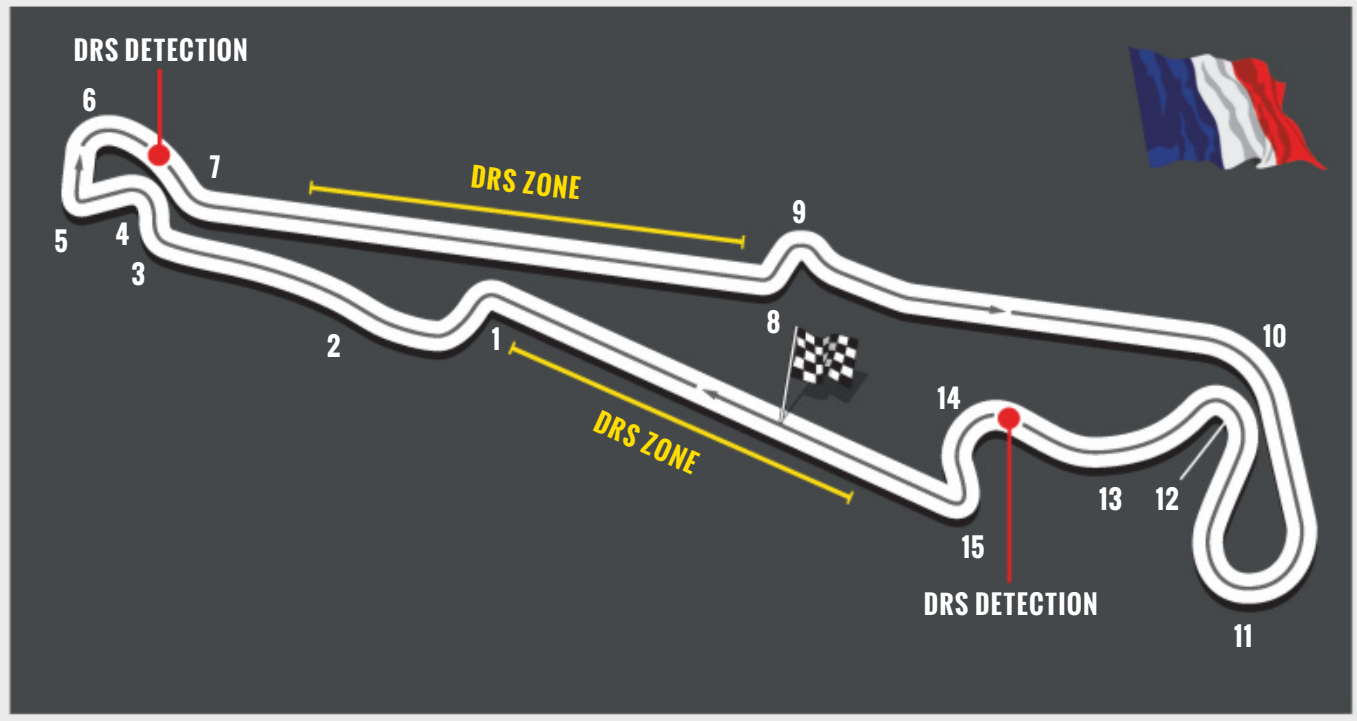
But Ferrari's Sainz tow plan gave the red team an extra edge. For the first runs in Q3 he led Leclerc out in the mid-pack – all the cars completing stunningly slow out-laps to maintain tyre life on the C4 softs. Leclerc dropped back to avoid Sainz's dirty air disturbing him through the technical first sector, then the leading Ferrari would wait at the Turns 8/9 chicane halfway down the Mistral straight before towing the other up the rest, through Signes and the leap right 100m before Beausset.

"ALL THE CARS COMPLETED STUNNINGLY SLOW OUT-LAPS TO MAINTAIN TYRE LIFE ON THE C4 SOFTS"

Leclerc led with a 1m31.209s after run one, but only by 0.008 seconds over Verstappen as he explained: "We were a bit too close in 8/9 and so I lost a little bit there." The second time it worked a treat – Leclerc gaining "around 0.2s compared to the Q2 lap without the tow" on his way to a 1m30.872s.

That put him 0.304s clear of Verstappen, who had improved his personal best overall. But slower sectors in the first two thirds – going slightly deep at Turn 1 and sliding across the Turn 9 apex – cost him. Red Bull blamed the wind, but Verstappen rued "a struggle to get the right balance". Sergio Perez took third, with Red Bull unable to deploy its own tow tactics as it had both cars eyeing "the best possible qualifying result", per Verstappen.

TRACKSIDE VIEW



What the 2022 Formula 1 field really didn't need was more bouncing. After all the work to reduce or eliminate end-of-straight porpoising and mid-corner hopping, things are finally looking a lot more stable across the grid. In FP3 at the French Grand Prix, Autosport marvels at the progress Mercedes has made on both bouncing problems – the W13s now planted through the brilliantly fast Signes right-hander.

It was a different corner type and therefore a very different story at Paul Ricard's Turn 5 the day before in FP1. We'd walked down to the western end of the circuit, baking in fierce sunshine. It's an important corner – momentum lost here will be felt all the way through the ever-faster Turn 6 right feeding into the Turn 7 left kink and onto the first half of the Mistral straight. So, a strong exit is the aim – albeit with care not to slide and send a heat spike through the tyres, which will need as much remaining life as possible come sector three on a qualifying lap.

The drivers are therefore struggling with understeer all through the sweeping, downhill right-then-left Turns 3 and 4 before us. For a single-lap flier, the cars that fire their rubber up to temperature – such as the Ferraris – will find this less of an issue. But others, such as Red Bull and its low-drag aerodynamic profile, are having a harder time. Max Verstappen is having to hustle his RB18 into every apex, pointing and squirting but still flying. Sergio Perez is smoother overall but clouting the Turn 3 kerbs too hard sends him spinning off spectacularly just before the 20-minute mark.

"EVERY CAR IS PRACTICALLY THREE-WHEELING ON TURN-IN"

But there's part of this complex that's making everything trickier – a big bump just at the Turn 5 turn-in point. It's been there ever since the track was resurfaced back in 2020, a consequence of additional drainage being installed. When running past the swanky hospitality banquet tables that have been erected around Turn 5 on Saturday evening, we hope this will ease the removal of any spilled vin rouge before race day…

Although team insiders insist the bump is no bigger on F1's potentially last visit to Paul Ricard compared to 2021, the ground-effects cars hate traversing such lumps. Esteban Ocon and Fernando Alonso are feeling it most – their Alpines oscillating wildly over both axles. But every car is practically three-wheeling on turn-in – where the bump can force the wary into a slide wide on the exit kerbs.

The drivers try various lines to try and avoid this. Home hero Pierre Gasly is neatly jinking through with a tighter line, but as his mediums wear this gets harder. At one stage he clatters the crest and nearly spins towards the kerbs. A bumpy ride indeed.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Big bump on the way into Turn 5 plays merry hell with both Alpines

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

FOX

Clenched fists and a mighty roar – Red Bull celebration apes giant red 'King Kong'

time in the final phase even as he repassed the McLarens and Alonso, his 30.4s post-second-stop deficit was just too great and the VSC timing unhelpful.

"We realised that there was not sufficient tyre life to go to the end of the race – as simple as that," said Binotto. "And to stay out would have been a risk in terms of safety and reliability in terms of tyre life. More than that, I think that Carlos's pace would not have been sufficient to open the gap more than five seconds to Perez and Russell, to somehow cover the penalty."

Russell had followed Sainz's Perez pursuit and was close enough on the lap after the Ferrari had got ahead running onto the pitstraight – Sainz temporarily sealing third with DRS on the inside run to Turn 1 – to mount an immediate assault.

"WE REALISED THAT THERE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT TYRE LIFE TO GO TO THE END OF THE RACE – SIMPLE AS THAT"

STALEY

First time Russell and Hamilton shared a podium as Mercedes team-mates

With his own DRS activation, Russell divebombed Perez into the Turns 8/9 chicane. When Perez turned in, the pair clashed at the first apex and the Red Bull cut the second to remain ahead. Russell fumed he had been "front wheel to rear wheel – that's the rule", which only really entitled him to racing room anyway. The stewards assessed the incident did not even warrant a full investigation and so it was on Russell, in the words of Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff, to "hunt him down".

He did so, but only got ahead in yet more bizarre circumstances. During the Zhou-stoppage-triggered VSC on lap 50, the system hardware in race control crashed – just after the suspension had been set to end. The back-up system kicked in but had to resend the "VSC ending" message – meaning the drivers were left waiting 54s instead of the 10-15s defined in the rules.

Perez had been expecting the VSC to end "out of Turn 9, so I went for it and then it didn't end". Instead, he'd made it to Turn 13 when the green flags flew, at which Perez lit up his rears and slid, and Russell "just gunned it" – pouncing superbly to get alongside his rival and then past ahead of the penultimate corner. Perez and Horner queried the system glitch, but the FIA insisted via a post-race statement "the same information is supplied to all teams concurrently".

Russell had three laps to hold on to share the podium with Hamilton for the first time as Mercedes team-mates – 300 races after the driver he'd met as a young karter had taken his F1 bow in 2007. Russell duly did so, leading to jubilant scenes at Mercedes, with Wolff explaining his pre-VSC radio intervention was because he felt Russell was "a little bit stuck in a loop of being upset about the situation".

But, although Leclerc's error made the story of the day, it belonged to Verstappen, who remained rational through the celebrations accompanying his seventh win of the campaign. "Of course, the lead we have is great," he reflected. "But it's probably a bit bigger than what it should have been when you look at the car performances between the two cars..."

NEXT F1 REPORT

HUNGARIAN GRAND PRIX
4 AUGUST ISSUE

OCON SHUNT DENIES TSUNODA POINTS CHANCE

Just eight corners were required for Yuki Tsunoda's hopes of scoring points to be wiped out, thanks to first-lap contact with home racer Esteban Ocon.

The AlphaTauri pilot had lined up eighth but was punted round through the Turn 8-9 chicane when Ocon lost control over the inside kerb to slide into Tsunoda.

The 10th-starting Alpine driver copped a five-second penalty and duly lost out to Daniel Ricciardo and Carlos Sainz when he made his elongated first stop. Meanwhile, Tsunoda retired on lap 17 from the resulting sidepod damage that ravaged his pace.

Tsunoda's assessment was: "I got quite a lot of damage early on and it just kept getting worse with each lap. I watched back the onboard and I definitely left enough space, but he lost control. It ruined our whole race and 5s is not enough in the end, when he continued with no damage, even getting some points. I know in racing these things happen, but it is such a shame, especially after such a good qualifying."

Ocon would eventually finish eighth as Pierre Gasly took the second upgraded AlphaTauri AT03 – which sported a new floor, diffuser and engine cover – to 12th (3s off the points) as a legacy of a persistent lack of high-speed grip. He reckoned "there was nothing that clicked".

STALEY

Alpine moves ahead of McLaren as Alonso overcomes Norris

Alpine leapfrogged McLaren for fourth in the constructors' championship as the two teams further asserted themselves at the front of the midfield. Fernando Alonso led a blue-and-papaya train when he snared sixth place ahead of Lando Norris.

McLaren gave its second major upgrade package a debut, the MCL36 wearing a trimmed rear wing, engine cover, floor and brake ducts to follow from its Spanish GP update in May. Meanwhile, Alpine stuck to its evolutionary form for its home race. The A522 ran a tweaked floor only as part of more minor but consistent changes.

It looked like McLaren's tactic would pay off more handsomely when Alonso qualified seventh, two spots and 0.5s adrift of Norris. But the Brit had too much wheelspin off the line to lose out to the two-time champion and George Russell. Norris was seen retrieving a mystery piece of debris from the right-hand sidepod in parc ferme, but the team confirmed this was not to blame for a loss of performance.

Alonso said: "It was a well-executed race from our side, we were obviously a little bit concerned at the beginning of the weekend that our pace was not great, but we ended up just behind the top three teams in our normal position so far this year."

With Ocon arriving over the line in eighth ahead of Daniel Ricciardo, Alpine broke the 81-point deadlock to snatch fourth on 93 points, four clear of McLaren – which had been 'best of the rest' behind Red Bull, Ferrari and Mercedes since Australia. The French racer, who copped a 5s penalty for turning round Yuki Tsunoda on lap one, was aided by the safety car, which afforded him a cheaper pitstop as he shed medium for hard Pirellis before chasing down Ricciardo. Ocon seized the position on lap 45 of 53 with a committed outside run through Signes.

BINGHAM

BIG NUMBER

300

The number of Formula 1 starts for Lewis Hamilton. "It was mentioned at the beginning of the weekend, and I didn't really think much of it," said the 103-time winner. "This morning, I woke up feeling incredibly grateful thinking about all the people that have been with me along the way. To have this incredible journey, every race powered by Mercedes, I'm so very proud to be representing them."

SUTTON

MAUGER

Stroll avoids censure after Vettel block

Sebastian Vettel was forced into final-corner evasive action to avoid clattering into his Aston Martin team-mate, Lance Stroll having slowed at the apex seemingly to prevent the German getting a superior launch for the sprint to the flag to nick the final point.

Stroll, who reckoned he "didn't do anything reckless", led a 10-11 result after climbing five places from 15th on the opening lap – neatly missing the Esteban Ocon-Yuki Tsunoda biff.

A snap of Stroll oversteer on the last lap, however, left Vettel free to hassle his stablemate and attempt a cutback through the final right-hander to jump on the power early. The four-time champion, who had pitted for hard tyres a lap later to avoid an Aston double-stack, said: "He was obviously hitting the brakes again, before accelerating, so caught me by surprise, and then I lost the momentum."

Latifi and Magnussen out in wake of shared-blame clash

Nicholas Latifi and Kevin Magnussen failed to make it to the flag after the pair came to blows at Turns 1 and 2 on lap 37 of 53. Neither driver would be apportioned blame for the shunt while battling for 14th, because the stewards reckoned both could have taken greater preventative action.

The Williams driver had tucked his car on the inside of the Haas into the opening left-hander and then drifted wide through the transition to leave Magnussen running over the inside rumble strip. He was therefore pinched into the FW44's sidepod, with Latifi having shut the door before ultimately spinning over the runoff.

Magnussen would pit at the end of the tour and into retirement, while Latifi lingered on for another three laps before his early bath owing to a puncture and "extensive car damage", per Williams head of vehicle performance Dave Robson.

As for the driver, Latifi reckoned: "I definitely don't think I was at fault for the incident with Kevin, it was maybe more of a racing incident.

"The incident was a shame as our pace was strong and we were racing out of position against cars that we were quite a bit quicker. Being further up in qualifying would have made a difference, but it's nice to get racing again."

BINGHAM

Q&A

LANDO NORRIS
McLAREN DRIVER

How were the hot conditions?
Tricky, a little bit windy – especially the long right [Beausset] where a gust of wind seemed to throw the car out sometimes. Managing the tyres was very difficult in the hot temperatures, especially if you want to do a one-stop to get right to the end with a good pace – you needed to protect a lot in the beginning. It was tough, and even physically. I still don't use a water bottle; it makes me feel too sick. I can't do too many fluids when I drive, I just barf it back up."

Why did you lose two places to Alonso and Russell at the start?
I had a little bit of wheelspin, but I don't think it changed our race in any way. [Alonso] still would have passed me. We achieved everything we should have done, could have done today. [It's] frustrating because after qualifying our hopes were pushed up a little bit. I did a very good lap to be in the middle of Mercedes, and they showed they can almost race for a win. For whatever reason, we maybe show a bit more pace in quali. The new tyres and low fuel hide a lot of our problems. As soon as we get into high fuel, old tyres, all those issues are exposed, and we're quite slow.

But might that one-lap pace help you at the narrower Hungaroring?
Yeah, it's true at certain tracks. You probably still prefer a good race car over a quali car throughout the season, though. It's not what we have at the minute. We would have been even slower today, and in an even worse position yesterday if we didn't have the updates that we brought here.

Alpine are, and have been all season, much quicker than us. They've just made a lot more mistakes, and we've done a very good job with a lot of things to be ahead. Now being behind them, it's realistic and where we deserve to be with the car.

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DRAWING BOARD

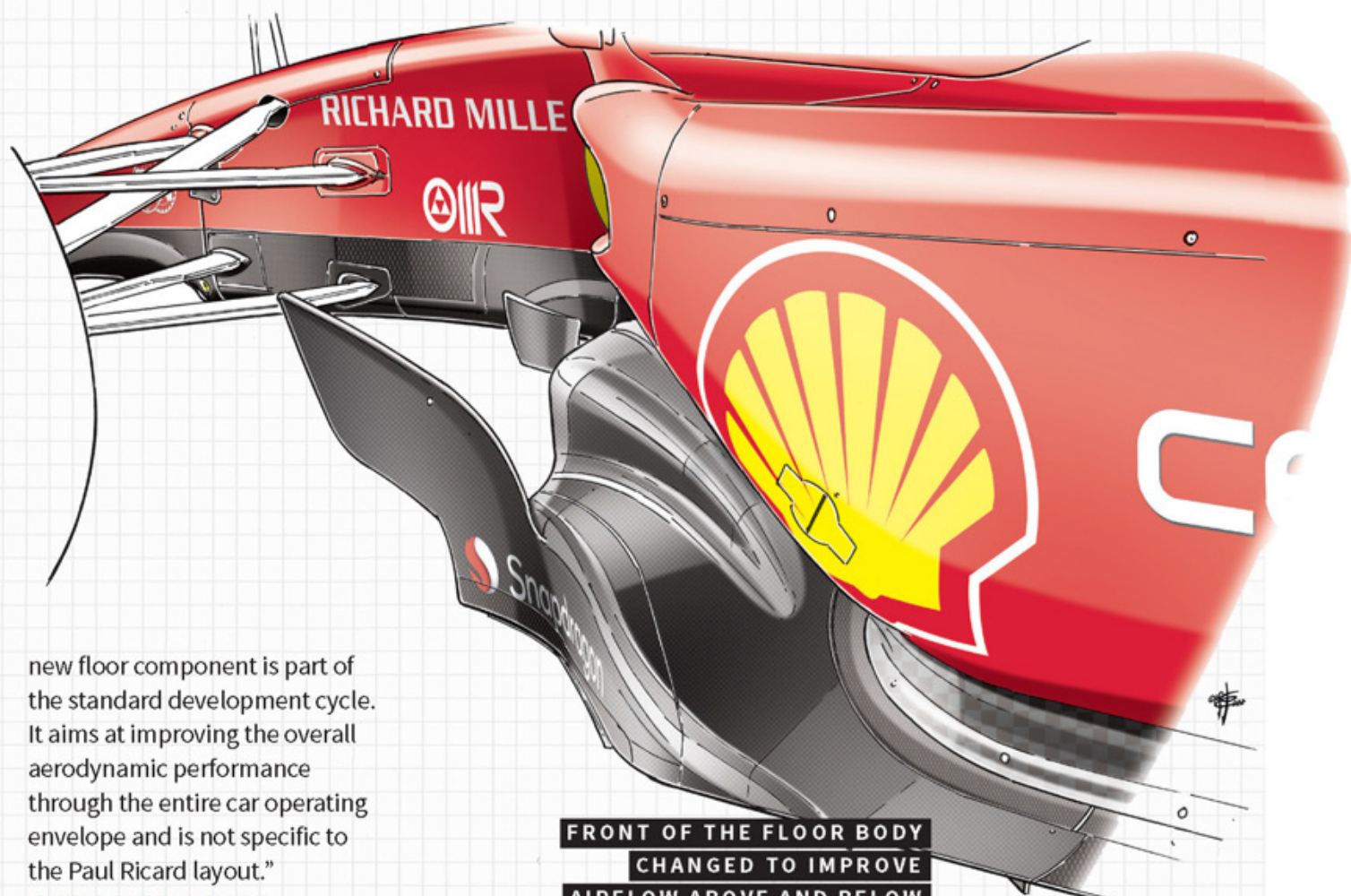
GIORGIO PIOLA

FERRARI KEEPS PUSHING WITH FLOOR CHANGES...

Putting aside the catalogue of errors that shaped Ferrari's French Grand Prix, the Scuderia continued to make gains on a technical front as it seeks to find an edge over Red Bull. It changed the front of the floor body, where the air enters the underbody tunnels, to improve the airflow both above and below. The outer portion of the floor 'inlet' has been made shorter, but the more central part has been made much taller to open it up. This suggests that Ferrari is trying to focus on drawing the airflow from the centre of the car through the floor and reduce the chance of any turbulent wake from the wheels passing underneath.

The changes also create a clear channel on top of the floor, between the height difference and the outer strake. This will bring the airflow passing on top around the sidepod to be worked with later on. Ferrari itself gives little away about the update, but explains that "the new floor component is part of the standard development cycle. It aims at improving the overall aerodynamic performance through the entire car operating envelope and is not specific to the Paul Ricard layout."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



FRONT OF THE FLOOR BODY CHANGED TO IMPROVE AIRFLOW ABOVE AND BELOW

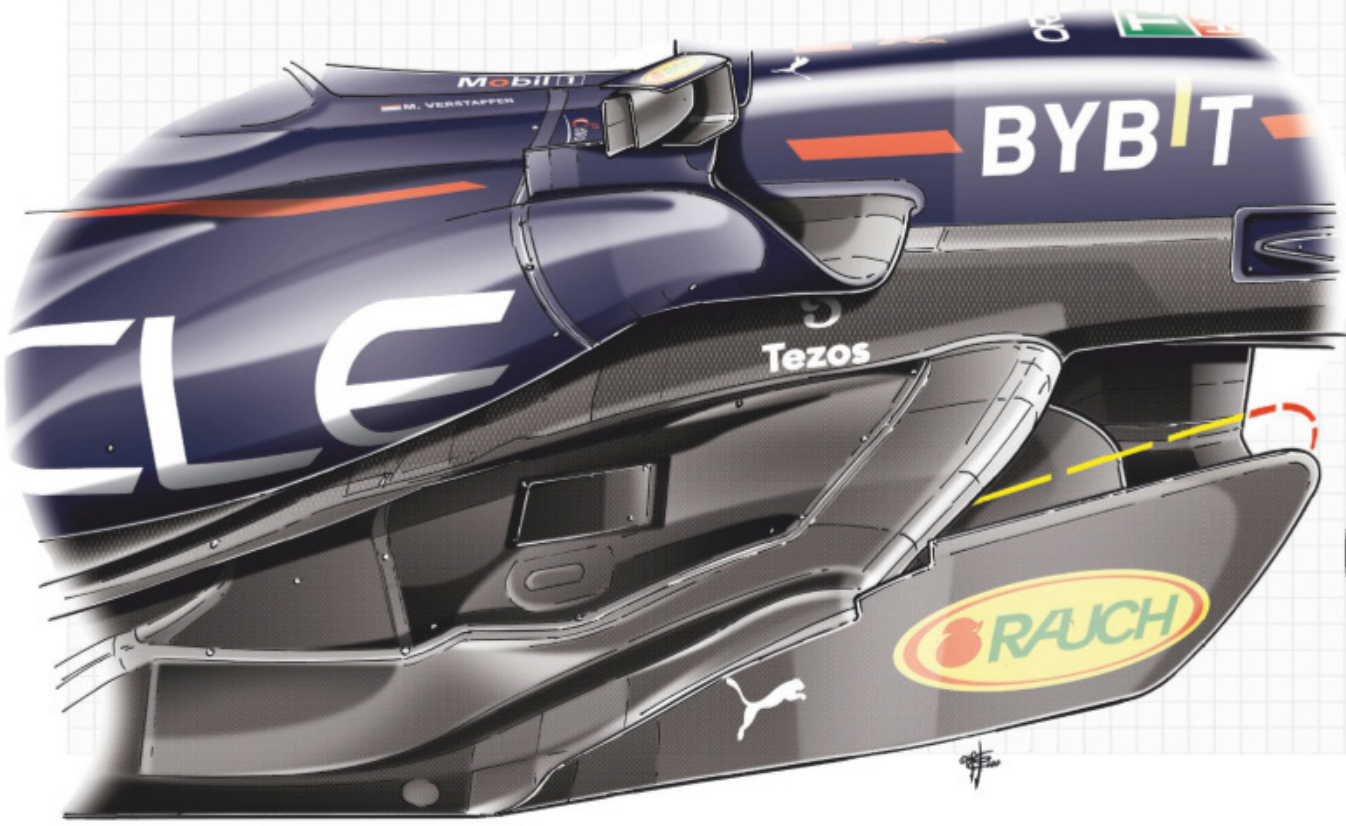
...BUT OTHERS AREN'T STANDING STILL EITHER

Red Bull has made a few floor changes too, with revised floor fences to "redistribute the local pressure distributions to improve load while maintaining the flow stability". The team also added a new wing to the cascade wings adjacent to the brakes to further increase downforce in that area.

Outside of the title-battling teams, McLaren and AlphaTauri introduced expansive upgrade packages at Paul Ricard. Revising its sidepods, McLaren introduced the sloping design that has become popular this season with a slight channel in the topside to direct airflow. The Woking squad also brought a new floor, rear wing tweaks to the endplate and brake duct changes – and did a back-to-back test between Lando Norris on the old specification and Daniel Ricciardo with the new parts in FP1 to understand how the updates had progressed. Norris was then given his own set of updates.

AlphaTauri also rang the changes as it has begun to sleepwalk out of points contention this year; both cars had use of a new floor to rework the vortices produced by the floor's edge and draw out more downforce. The front of the floor was reworked with new fences, with the team raising the 'shoulder' of the bodywork to enhance what it describes as a "gulley" and improve the quality of airflow to the rear of the car. These changes also manage front wheel wake more adequately.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



REVISED FLOOR FENCES AND NEW CASCADE WING

FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m33.930s
2	Verstappen	1m34.021s
3	Sainz	1m34.268s
4	Russell	1m34.881s
5	Gasly	1m34.979s
6	Perez	1m35.174s
7	Norris	1m35.232s
8	Albon	1m35.414s
9	de Vries	1m35.426s
10	Ricciardo	1m35.660s
11	Zhou	1m35.676s
12	Stroll	1m35.810s
13	Ocon	1m35.828s
14	Vettel	1m35.851s
15	Alonso	1m35.875s
16	Schumacher	1m36.022s
17	Magnussen	1m36.104s
18	Tsunoda	1m36.127s
19	Kubica	1m36.332s
20	Latifi	1m37.043s

WEATHER Sunny, air 31-33C track 54-55C

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sainz	1m32.527s
2	Leclerc	1m32.628s
3	Verstappen	1m33.077s
4	Russell	1m33.291s
5	Hamilton	1m33.517s
6	Norris	1m33.607s
7	Gasly	1m33.906s
8	Magnussen	1m33.928s
9	Ricciardo	1m33.984s
10	Perez	1m34.060s
11	Alonso	1m34.259s
12	Bottas	1m34.264s
13	Vettel	1m34.420s
14	Tsunoda	1m34.540s
15	Stroll	1m34.595s
16	Albon	1m34.653s
17	Zhou	1m34.654s
18	Ocon	1m34.660s
19	Schumacher	1m35.195s
20	Latifi	1m35.412s

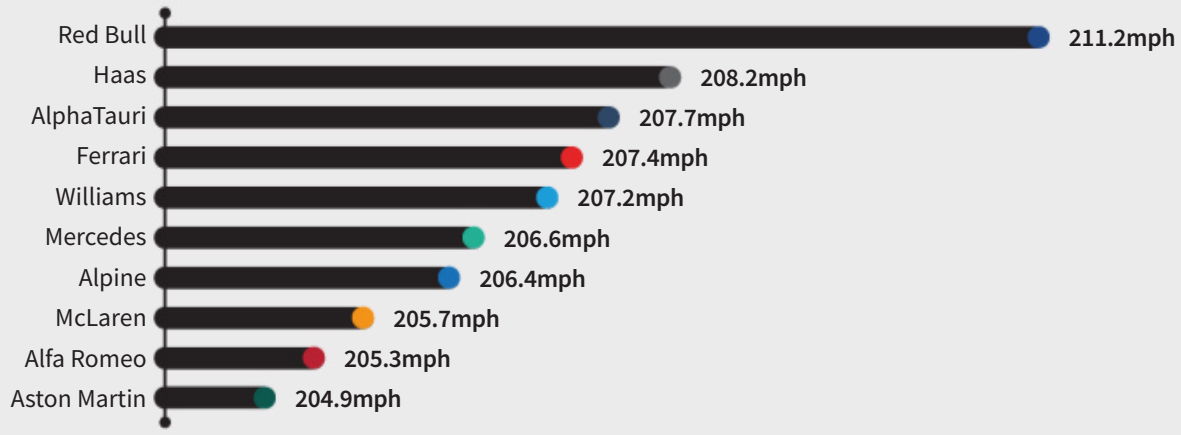
WEATHER Sunny, air 32-34C track 48-53C

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m32.272s
2	Sainz	1m32.626s
3	Leclerc	1m32.909s
4	Hamilton	1m33.255s
5	Perez	1m33.293s
6	Russell	1m33.376s
7	Alonso	1m33.505s
8	Albon	1m33.558s
9	Norris	1m33.669s
10	Tsunoda	1m33.751s
11	Ricciardo	1m33.788s
12	Latifi	1m33.841s
13	Gasly	1m33.869s
14	Bottas	1m33.872s
15	Zhou	1m33.911s
16	Magnussen	1m34.031s
17	Ocon	1m34.122s
18	Stroll	1m34.177s
19	Schumacher	1m34.222s
20	Vettel	1m34.536s

WEATHER Sunny, air 31-34C track 48-52C

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m31.727s
2	Verstappen	1m31.891s
3	Sainz	1m32.297s
4	Perez	1m32.354s
5	Norris	1m32.672s
6	Magnussen	1m32.756s
7	Alonso	1m32.819s
8	Bottas	1m33.034s
9	Hamilton	1m33.041s
10	Russell	1m33.109s
11	Vettel	1m33.285s
12	Ocon	1m33.346s
13	Tsunoda	1m33.394s
14	Ricciardo	1m33.404s
15	Albon	1m33.423s
16	Gasly	1m33.439s
17	Stroll	1m33.439s
18	Zhou	1m33.674s
19	Schumacher	1m33.701s
20	Latifi	1m33.794s

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sainz	1m31.081s
2	Leclerc	1m31.216s
3	Verstappen	1m31.990s
4	Perez	1m32.120s
5	Hamilton	1m32.274s
6	Alonso	1m32.631s
7	Russell	1m32.633s
8	Magnussen	1m32.649s
9	Norris	1m32.777s
10	Tsunoda	1m32.836s
11	Ricciardo	1m32.922s
12	Ocon	1m33.048s
13	Bottas	1m33.052s
14	Vettel	1m33.276s
15	Albon	1m33.307s

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m30.872s
2	Verstappen	1m31.176s
3	Perez	1m31.335s
4	Hamilton	1m31.765s
5	Norris	1m32.032s
6	Russell	1m32.131s
7	Alonso	1m32.552s
8	Tsunoda	1m32.780s
9	Sainz	no time
10	Magnussen	no time

WEATHER Sunny, air 31-33C track 50-53C

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

	DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1	Verstappen	233	1	1
2	Leclerc	170	1	1
3	Perez	163	1	1
4	Sainz	144	1	1
5	Russell	143	3	4
6	Hamilton	127	2	4
7	Norris	70	3	3
8	Ocon	56	5	5
9	Bottas	46	5	5
10	Alonso	37	5	2
11	Magnussen	22	5	4
12	Ricciardo	19	6	6
13	Gasly	16	5	6
14	Vettel	15	6	9
15	Schumacher	12	6	6
16	Tsunoda	11	7	8
17	Zhou	5	8	9
18	Stroll	4	10	10
19	Albon	3	9	11
20	Latifi	0	12	10
21	Hulkenberg	0	12	17

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Red Bull	396
2	Ferrari	314
3	Mercedes	270
4	Alpine	93
5	McLaren	89
6	Alfa Romeo	51
7	Haas	34
8	AlphaTauri	27
9	Aston Martin	19
10	Williams	3

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	**6**	**6**	**Russell**
Verstappen	**9**	3	Perez
Leclerc	**9**	1	Sainz
Ricciardo	1	**10**	**Norris**
Alonso	**6**	4	Ocon
Gasly	**7**	4	Tsunoda
Vettel	**8**	2	Stroll
Stroll	**1**	**1**	**Hulkenberg**
Latifi	2	**9**	**Albon**
Zhou	3	**9**	**Bottas**
Magnussen	**10**	2	Schumacher

Based on Q1/Q2/Q3 sessions, not sprint races. Events removed when one driver in a team could not record a representative time for reasons outside their control

WINS

Verstappen	7
Leclerc	3
Perez	1
Sainz	1

FASTEST LAPS

Leclerc	3
Verstappen	3
Perez	2
Sainz	2
Hamilton	1
Norris	1

POLE POSITIONS

Leclerc	7
Verstappen	3
Perez	1
Sainz	1

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STARTING GRID

RACE RESULTS ROUND 12/22 (53 LAPS – 192.43 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	**Max Verstappen** (NLD)	Red Bull	1h30m02.112s	35	Mn, Hn
2	**Lewis Hamilton** (GBR)	Mercedes	+10.587s	1	Mn, Hn
3	**George Russell** (GBR)	Mercedes	+16.495s		Mn, Hu
4	**Sergio Perez** (MEX)	Red Bull	+17.310s		Mn, Hn
5	**Carlos Sainz** (ESP)	Ferrari	+28.872s		Hn, Mn, Mn
6	**Fernando Alonso** (ESP)	Alpine-Renault	+42.879s		Mn, Hn
7	**Lando Norris** (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+52.026s		Mn, Hn
8	**Esteban Ocon** (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+56.959s		Mn, Hn
9	**Daniel Ricciardo** (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+1m00.372s		Mn, Hn
10	**Lance Stroll** (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m02.549s		Mu, Hu
11	**Sebastian Vettel** (DEU)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m04.494s		Mu, Hu
12	**Pierre Gasly** (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Red Bull	+1m05.448s		Hn, Mn
13	**Alexander Albon** (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m08.565s		Mn, Hn
14	**Valtteri Bottas** (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+1m16.666s		Hn, Hn, Mn
15	**Mick Schumacher** (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m20.394s		Mn, Hn, Hn
16	**Zhou Guanyu** (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-6 laps		Mn, Hn, Hn
R	**Nicholas Latifi** (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	40 laps-accident damage		Mn, Hn, Mn
R	**Kevin Magnussen** (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	37 laps-accident damage		Mn, Hn, Hn
R	**Charles Leclerc** (MCO)	Ferrari	17 laps-accident	17	Mn
R	**Yuki Tsunoda** (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Red Bull	17 laps-accident damage		Mn, Hn

WEATHER Sunny, air 31-35C track 53-57C

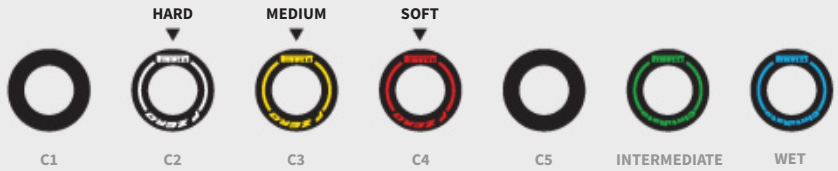
WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 128.238mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 136.438mph

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	**Sainz**	1m35.781s	-	51
2	**Verstappen**	1m37.491s	+1.710s	30
3	**Russell**	1m37.548s	+1.767s	51
4	**Hamilton**	1m37.668s	+1.887s	30
5	**Perez**	1m37.780s	+1.999s	45
6	**Bottas**	1m37.963s	+2.182s	52
7	**Leclerc**	1m38.088s	+2.307s	4
8	**Alonso**	1m38.160s	+2.379s	53
9	**Ocon**	1m38.684s	+2.903s	53
10	**Gasly**	1m38.786s	+3.005s	53
11	**Norris**	1m39.037s	+3.256s	43
12	**Vettel**	1m39.044s	+3.263s	43
13	**Schumacher**	1m39.068s	+3.287s	48
14	**Ricciardo**	1m39.133s	+3.352s	27
15	**Stroll**	1m39.185s	+3.404s	52
16	**Albon**	1m39.199s	+3.418s	53
17	**Magnussen**	1m39.265s	+3.484s	11
18	**Zhou**	1m39.368s	+3.587s	25
19	**Latifi**	1m39.650s	+3.869s	40
20	**Tsunoda**	1m40.216s	+4.435s	4

TYRES

KEY: **H - Hard** **M - Medium** **S - Soft** **I - Intermediate** **W - Wet** n - New set u - Used set



RACE BRIEFING

FP1

NYCK DE VRIES replaced Hamilton at Mercedes

ROBERT KUBICA replaced Bottas at Alfa Romeo

GRID PENALTIES

SAINZ 10-place penalty and then required to start from the back

MAGNUSSEN Required to start from the back for additional power unit elements used

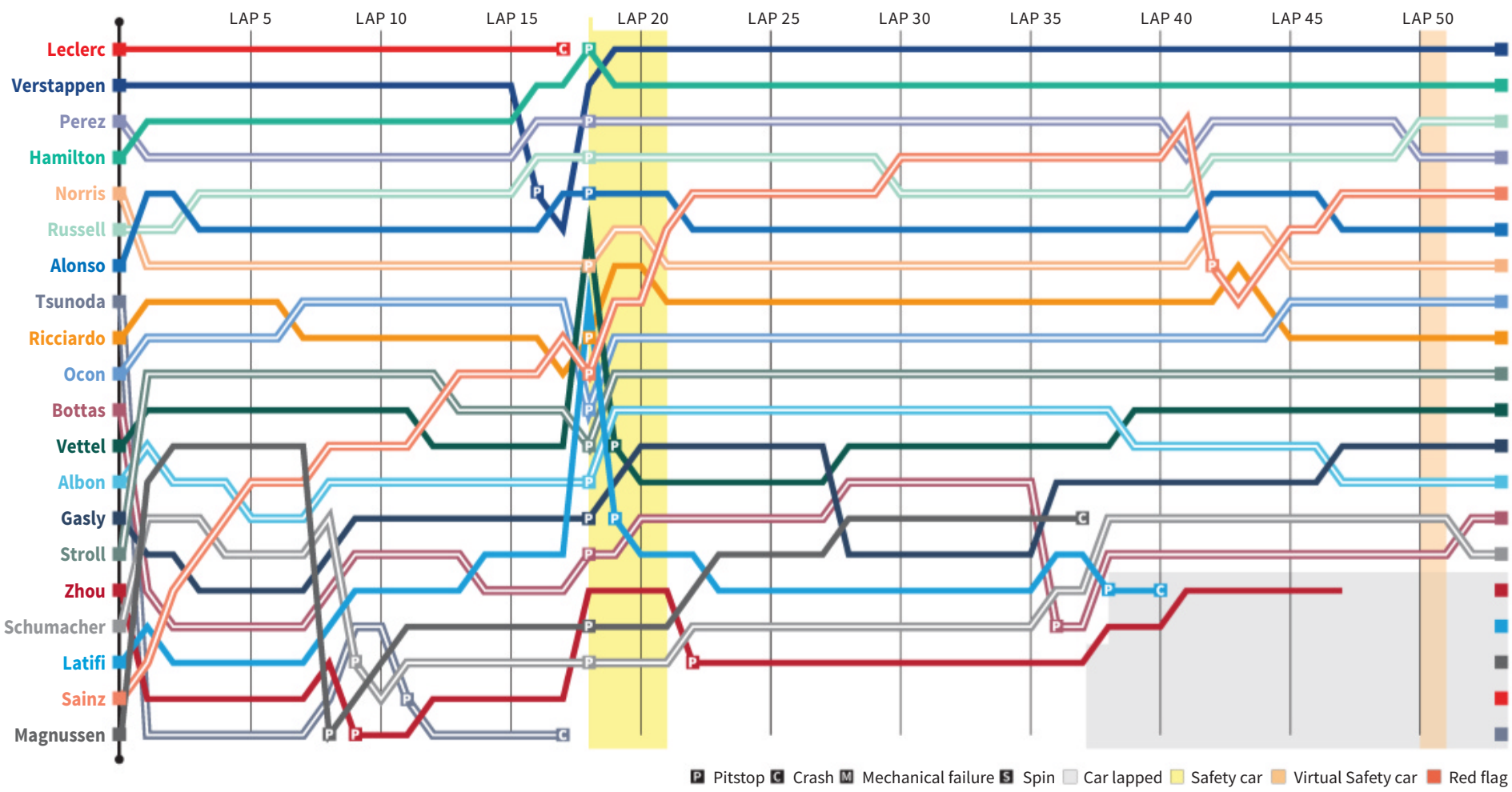
RACE PENALTIES

OCON Five-second penalty and two licence points for causing a collision with Tsunoda

SAINZ 5s penalty for unsafe pitstop release

ZHOU 5s penalty and two licence points for causing a collision with Schumacher

LAP CHART What happened, when



VERSTAPPEN SO CLOSE TO TOP SCORERS HAMILTON AND SAINZ

The Mercedes and Ferrari drivers take full marks in France, while the reigning world champion's post-restart brilliance isn't quite enough to tip it

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES

LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **4th** — Result **2nd**

10 Hard to see what more he could have done through the weekend. Nailed his best sectors at the death in Q3 to secure fourth, then jumped Perez off the line. Kept him at bay all while preserving his mediums better, then drove away. Did likewise after the restart on hards.

GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **6th** — Result **3rd**

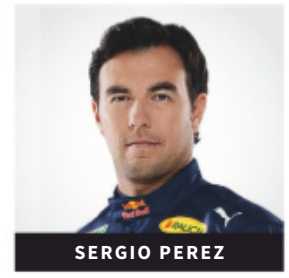
9 Another excellent race drive, but he can't get the maximum as Norris was able to slot in ahead in the slower McLaren in Q3. Avenged this with an around-the-outside first corner pass, saw off Alonso quickly, then tracked Perez. Made life hard for Sainz and opportunistically got Perez in VSC confusion.

RED BULL

MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **2nd** — Result **1st**

9 A 9.9 if we could. Costly slips at Turns 1 and 9 contributed to pole defeat. Then early hot pursuit of Leclerc featured a track limits violation and he also had to be warned not to be too aggressive on his steering in the high-speed stuff, adding to his tyre concerns. Totally commanding post-restart.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **3rd** — Result **4th**

4 Two reasons for this score. The first is being so far from his team-mate's race pace, struggling with tyre degradation, that he was beaten by two slower Mercedes and possibly would have lost out to Sainz too. The other is messing up the glitched VSC restart and sliding when Russell nailed it.

FERRARI

CHARLES LECLERC

Started **1st** — Result **R**

4 Is saved from a three because he got pole. Was doing so well under huge pressure from Verstappen early on, as he confounded expectations Ferrari would wilt against Red Bull's straightline advantage. Managed his mediums well even as they blistered in the heat but blew it all with his race-costing crash.

CARLOS SAINZ JR

Started **19th** – Result **5th**

10 Played team tow game beautifully in Q3. Was making steady recovery from 19th grid spot when safety car meant he closed the leaders' gap but lost his contra-strategy advantage and was hurt by Ferrari's service shambles. Flew after restart, with his Russell pass the pick of the lot.

McLAREN

DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **9th** — Result **9th**

6 Poor qualifying and race pace relative to Norris. Missed Q3 cut, then in the race battled by Tsunoda at the start. Did well to defy Sainz for a while pre-safety car but couldn't stop his restart attack. Held Ocon at bay before eventually being repassed and ending up not too far in front of Stroll by the flag.

LANDO NORRIS

Started **5th** — Result **7th**

7 Did excellently to beat Russell's faster Mercedes in qualifying, but can't score higher for several reasons. One was his wheelspin-heavy start that meant he dropped behind Alonso and Russell, while another was effectively falling out of Verstappen's way just after the eventual winner pitted.

ALPINE

FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **7th** — Result **6th**

8 Outqualified by Norris – to the tune of 0.5s – but made amends with aggressive start to get the McLaren and Russell on the inside of Turn 1. Slipped back behind the Mercedes he was never going to keep at bay and was twice passed by the equally irresistible Sainz, all while keeping Norris at arm's length.

ESTEBAN OCON

Started **10th** – Result **8th**

6 Improved with final Q2 run where he was still unhappy with a loose rear but couldn't match Alonso's Q3. It's his Mistral chicane Tsunoda clouting that brings his score down, as clipping the kerb and losing the rear meant he was at fault. Overcame his penalty with a charging drive.

ALPHATAURI

PIERRE GASLY

Started **14th** - Result **12th**

4 Struggled with Q1 understeer, then on final lap nearly dropped it. Slipped back early on in the race, then faced testing drive as he battled "a lot of sliding around". Botched Mistral chicane attack on Albon at halfway point let Vettel and Bottas by, with Magnussen passing at Beausset.

YUKI TSUNODA

Started **8th** — Result **R**

8 Can only really be assessed on qualifying performance given race effectively over on first lap. Took finally upgraded AlphaTauri to Q3 for first time since Baku in June as he impressed AlphaTauri with consistent lapping and himself in adapting so quickly to changed AT03.

Hamilton impressed across the weekend, capping it with second place

ASTON MARTIN

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Started **12th** - Result **11th**

7 Delivered Q2 but losing out at Beausset on lap one against Stroll hurts his score. As both Astons ran line-astern at the safety car, the team felt it could not hold Vettel in crowded pitlane and the subsequent extra tour meant Albon and Gasly passed. Recovered by them nicely and was all over Stroll late on.

LANCE STROLL

Started **15th** - Result **10th**

6 Blamed traffic for missing Q2, but Gasly was far ahead. Excellent battling first lap gained five places and critically passed Vettel, meaning he could be serviced as soon as the safety car was called. Held 10th for the long second stint and was close to Ricciardo late on. Last corner chop on Vettel appeared unsavoury.

WILLIAMS

NICHOLAS LATIFI

Started **18th** — Result **R**

5 Lack of grip unsettled in the wind meant qualifying last. Got stuck in on lap one, then gained as others stopped. Stormed past Bottas when the Finn lost DRS to Gasly ahead but having to wait to stop under the safety car undid that. Battled Haas cars thereafter, sharing blame for Magnussen crash.

ALEX ALBON

Started **13th** Result **13th**

6 Spun late in Q1 as wind picking up adversely affected FW44s, but progressed thanks to Schumacher's error. A lap-one gainer, he then ran ahead of Gasly before safety car stops and likewise jumped Vettel there. Held off the Aston for a time in the second half but ate through his tyres and fell behind Gasly.

ALFA ROMEO

ZHOU GUANYU

Started **16th** - Result **16th**

4 Knocked out in Q1 with a rear so loose he nearly spun in Turn 6 on his final lap. In the race was shuffled back to net last on first lap and like his team-mate lacked the pace to make a big difference. Deservedly got penalised for clash with Schumacher because his oversteer slip led to the contact.

VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **11th** - Result **14th**

5 Qualified 13th after having to use an extra set of softs escaping Q1 and regretted it. Made shocking start to drop from 11th to 16th. Struggled for race pace thereafter and ended up as the second-highest two-stopper. Got fellow two-stopper Schumacher with a nice outside-Turn-1 pass late on.

HAAS

KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started **20th** — Result **R**

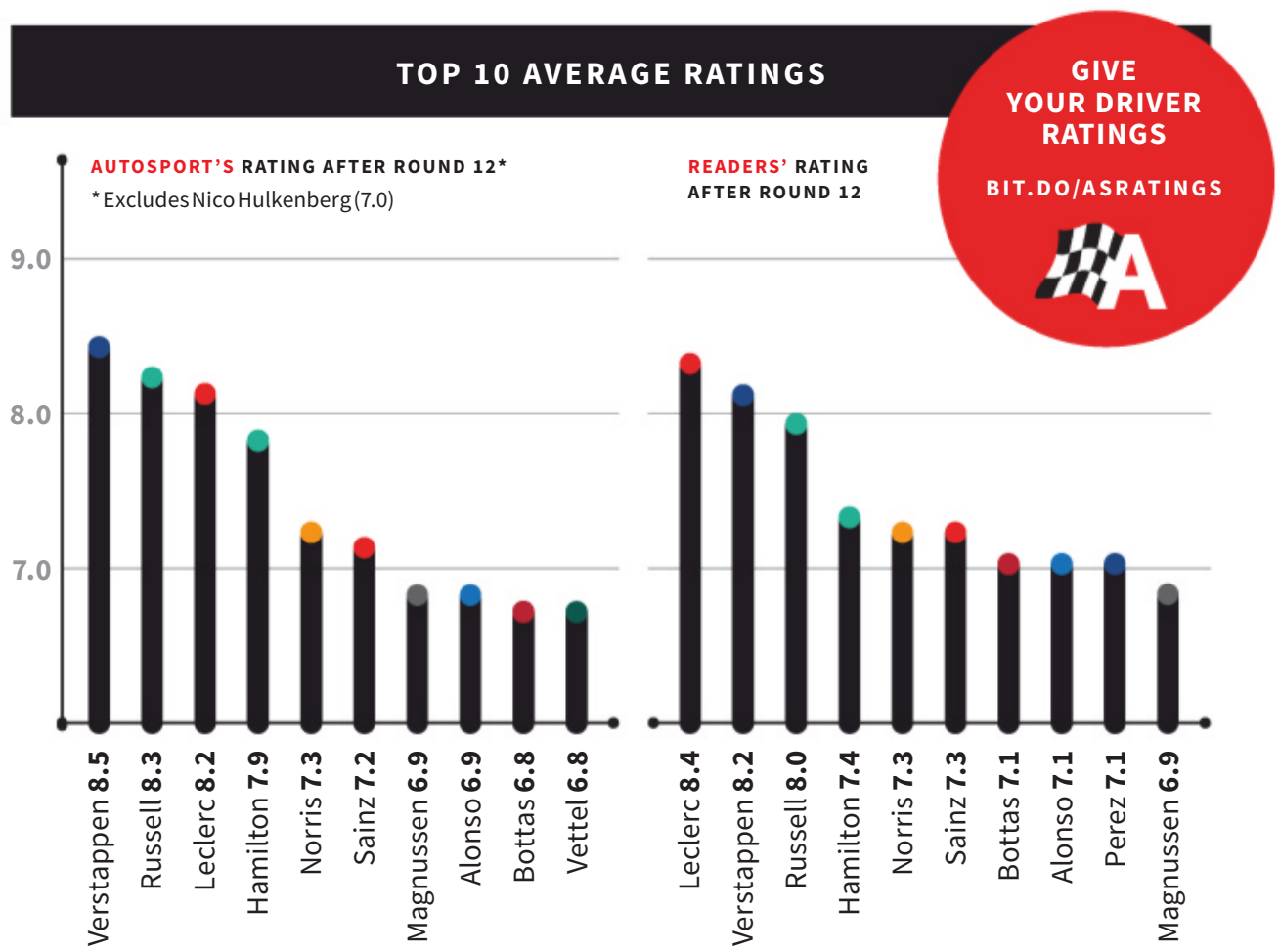
7 Proved Haas had pace to make Q3. From engine-change penalty grid spot of last he was brilliantly feisty to gain seven places on lap one, but safety car ruined his two-stop plan. Pays for his part in the Latifi Turn 2 clash with a lowered mark, with the stewards blaming both equally.

MICK SCHUMACHER

Started **17th** · Result **15th**

5 Score is largely down to the track limits violation that dropped him from safe Q2 berth to being out in Q1. Aggressively *just* cutting Turn 3 was so costly. In the race, Haas's planned two-stop strategy was totally undone by the safety car and, while he battled from there, a recovery wasn't on.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



GIVE YOUR DRIVER RATINGS

BIT.DO/ASRATINGS

INDYCAR IOWA

Newgarden dominates but ends weekend in hospital

The Penske star won the first encounter and was leading the second when a car failure put him in the wall and handed victory to O'Ward

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

He didn't take pole for either race in last weekend's double-header at Iowa Speedway, but Josef Newgarden should have emerged with two wins. His imperiousness around the D-shaped 0.894-mile oval in Newton, Iowa, is legendary. He entered the weekend having led 1150 laps here, his closest rivals among active drivers being Will Power and Scott Dixon... on 131 and 130 respectively.

Newgarden pushed his Iowa tally up to 1506 laps across the two days, but took 'only' one win, a comprehensive rout of the opposition on Saturday – 208 of 250 laps led after passing pole-winning team-mate Power on lap 23 following a restart. The following day, Newgarden was set to achieve something similar in the longer 300-lap race, despite waiting a whole 83 laps to find a way around Power (polesitter again). But on his 235th lap, between Turns 3 and 4, something appeared to fail on the right rear suspension, and the #2 Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet 'squatted' down, its left-front uselessly pawing the air, and the car snapped into a spin that sent it up the track, making heavy contact with the SAFER barrier on the outside of Turn 4.

Newgarden alighted from the car, looked winded and understandably shocked, and was taken by the AMR Safety Team to the infield medical care centre. He later emerged and spoke coherently to NBC but then, after a second chat with IndyCar medics, he fainted and fell, sustaining a cut to the back of the head. Due to heavy traffic – new sponsor, supermarket chain Hy-Vee had turned this event into a success story – Newgarden was flown by helicopter to the local hospital in Des Moines, where he would stay under observation on Sunday night. He was due to be reassessed Thursday morning, the day before practice for the next round.

The #2 strand of Team Penske had cause to feel deflated. Had things played out the way they deserved in race two, Newgarden

Iowa king Newgarden looked set for a brace of victories on the D-shaped oval

Newgarden was able to exit his car after the impact, but later collapsed

would now be leading the championship. Instead he's 34 points behind Chip Ganassi Racing's Marcus Ericsson. But Newgarden's misfortune should not detract from Pato O'Ward's excellence — he's finished top three in eight of his last 10 oval starts — and in that regard he was fully deserving of his triumph on Sunday.

On Saturday, he and Arrow McLaren SP proved the only combo able to pass Power and stay there (aside from Newgarden, of course), and they did it first by pitting a couple of laps earlier at the first round of on-strategy stops. Tyre degradation at Iowa is so severe that, while a driver can lap at 165mph at the start of a stint on a full fuel load, by lap 60 they can be more than 10mph slower despite now running on light tanks. Thus even had O'Ward's in-laps and out-laps not been *au point*, the time he gained in just two laps on fresh Firestones would have seen him overhaul Power.

The lead trio had been disrupted by Colton Herta in the opening stint, for the Andretti Autosport driver had risen from 17th on the grid to 13th until the first caution, and had then led a string of off-strategy cars to the pitlane. Taking full advantage of 19-lap fresher rubber, he had carved through the field after the lap 22 restart, and passed O'Ward for third on lap 50, before reverting to 'standard' strategy, pitting for a second time but now with the majority... after which he never truly troubled the leaders again. He would eventually lose several laps in the pits with transmission issues.

The next man to mess with the top trio — now in the order Newgarden-O'Ward-Power — was the remarkable Ericsson. He had led the mediocre four-fold Ganassi attack in qualifying, 12th through 15th, but had been on the move from the drop of the green flag. By lap 99, he was passing Power and, when his Swedish compatriot Felix Rosenqvist spun the oversteering second Arrow McLaren SP into the wall, Ericsson was able to close right up on O'Ward under caution, and at the restart sweep past, swiftly followed by Power.

There was then another yellow for a chunky piece of debris on the start/finish line, bringing Newgarden into Ericsson's sights. Soon after the next restart, the #8 Huski Chocolate car nuzzled the leader's left-rear. It didn't hurt either machine, but Ericsson lost momentum, and was passed by Power on lap 137. Twenty laps later, it was O'Ward's turn to demote the Ganassi driver and, shortly after that, Ericsson had to tap dance on the pedals and wrestle the steering wheel to control a lurid slide up the race track that dropped him to ninth.

The fourth and final caution, for Ed Carpenter crashing, hastened the arrival in the top three of another Ganassi driver, defending champion Alex Palou, who got around O'Ward on the restart and started trying to find a way past Power. Having failed to do so, he had taken the best out of his tyres running in the dirty air of the Penske car, leaving him easy prey for O'Ward. The Mexican driver once more had a clear shot at Power, who had maxed

"Had things played out in race two, Newgarden would now be leading the championship"

out his in-cockpit tools trying to compensate for taking a chunk of life out of his rear tyres with a couple of tail-slides at the previous restart. For three laps, he and O'Ward went back and forth until finally the AMSP driver made it stick on lap 218 and pulled away.

However, Newgarden's uncanny patience and judgment through traffic always kept him out of reach and he drove on to his fourth Iowa win. Everyone else had been wrestling with worn-out tyres, so while they had fuel enough to go to the end, a yellow in those last 50 laps would have seen all the leaders head into the pitlane. However, they couldn't take the risk of there *not* being a caution and pitting anyway, because this sub-20s lap means a stop under green-flag conditions costs a driver two laps.

Sure enough, those final 75 laps ran caution-free and so drivers were desperately nursing their rubber to the checkered flag. O'Ward could run 145-147mph laps, Power was down to 143-145, while Newgarden — who had run in rather more clean air for »

the majority of the stint, could still regularly produce laps north of 150. He crossed the line over six seconds clear of O'Ward who had a 14s margin over Power.

In fact, Power only just clung onto that final podium spot, as he was hunted down in the closing laps by Rinus VeeKay's Ed Carpenter Racing machine, once he had deposed Palou, who also lost fifth to Dixon.

All four Ganassi drivers had starred at times in race one, for Jimmie Johnson, in only his third oval race in an IndyCar, had pulled off several heart-in-mouth outside passes — on one occasion with two cars below him! — and only his inexperience

"Romain Grosjean kept his nose clean and his emotions in check to deliver two top-10s"

ABBOTT

at nursing dying rubber in the closing stint dropped him outside the top 10. He would shine again within 24 hours...

Qualifying had been held on Saturday morning with the first flyer in a two-lap run deciding the grid for race one, the second flyer determining the order for the sequel. Between qualifying and race one the cars had been impounded in parc ferme conditions, obliging teams to go for compromise set-ups that allowed a car to be fast in both low-fuel, fresh-rubber trim and also over a race stint. Of course, there were no such restrictions for race two, so lessons learned from Saturday could be applied for Sunday, albeit without a practice session to test any set-up changes.

However, most teams got things right so the second race was a more settled affair, with cars better honed and drivers better understanding what was and wasn't possible. Power looked after his tyres better through traffic while leading so was able to hold off Newgarden for longer, albeit not long enough. But again, AMSP jumped O'Ward ahead of the #12 Penske by making its third of four stops a couple of laps before the Penske duo, which put him in prime position to take the glory following Newgarden's crash. Nothing should be taken away from O'Ward, however, for once ahead, he repelled Power's challenges and eventually pulled away for his fourth IndyCar victory, his pursuer admitting he had been slightly too cautious in the penultimate stint, fearing for his tyre life when in fact the degradation proved less pronounced than the day before.

Again the Ganassi cars rose through the field, or at least, three of them did (Palou was off the pace) despite this time remaining on-strategy for this longer race. Dixon was third after Newgarden's shunt, but on the restart — as at the start and the first restart — he found his cold-tyred car bottoming out, and he was zapped around the outside by compatriot Scott McLaughlin in the third Penske car. McLaughlin had

THE SIX DRIVERS IN TITLE CONTENTION

GALSTAD

With five races to go, IndyCar has a six-way championship fight between three Ganassi drivers, two Penske champions and one Arrow McLaren SP ace. They are covered by 44 points in a series where the top four in any race outside the Indianapolis 500 are rewarded with 50-40-35-32 points, each place thereafter descending in two-point increments until 10th, then in one-point increments down to 18th. Marcus Ericsson's triumph at the 500 (worth double points) and finishes outside the top eight that day for all his title opponents bar runner-up Pato O'Ward is the main reason he leads the title race by eight points. Behind him is Will Power, who also has only one win but has amassed five other podiums, and finished in the top four in nine of the 12 races. The fact that Josef Newgarden is 34 points adrift of Ericsson (left) despite four wins says much about the uneven nature of his season, while Scott Dixon is on the same points tally due largely to a win and only one finish outside the top 10. That was the 500, a race he'd have won without that pitlane speed transgression…

O'Ward has two wins and is only two points behind Newgarden/Dixon, his retirements at Road America and Mid-Ohio hurting him badly. Defending champion Alex Palou has yet to win this year but could conquer at four of the remaining five rounds. But he's murmured that, understandably, due to his increasingly imminent departure to McLaren, longer term technical insights at Ganassi are not flowing his way as they once did. Ganassi is too professional to hurt Palou's 2022 prospects, but he may miss the psychological support.

POWERED BY motorsport STATS

Power was polesitter in both races, and had to be content with a third and a second place

been dropped into the nether regions of the running order on Saturday after being sent out from a pitstop with a loose rear wheel, obliging him to drive slowly and pit again, costing him several laps. This time, he was able to prove he could make the most out of Penske's strong Iowa set-ups.

Behind Dixon — and until a lap 133 restart, in front of him — Johnson took full advantage of his burgeoning confidence at the venue, to enjoy a torrid battle with another team-mate, Ericsson, who had again scythed through the field and run fourth through the middle portion of the race. With both of them passed by Dixon, this pair fought hard in the final stint, and it was the NASCAR legend who prevailed to take fifth, after his most convincing drive in an IndyCar. Ganassi notably refrained from asking him to move aside in order to maximise the championship leader's points.

A couple of quiet stars should be noted. On a wretched weekend for Andretti Autosport — and the technically affiliated Meyer Shank Racing — Romain Grosjean kept his nose clean and his emotions in check to deliver two top-10s, while Callum Ilott scored a couple of top 12s for Juncos Hollinger Racing. Given that Iowa Speedway is the track most likely to induce errors from oval rookies, for them to have survived 550 laps (549 in their cases) was commendable.

NEXT REPORT

INDIANAPOLIS
4 AUGUST ISSUE

O'Ward was fully deserving of his Sunday victory

GALSTAD

RESULTS ROUND 11/16, IOWA (USA), 23-24 JULY RACE 1 (250 LAPS – 223.500 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Josef Newgarden** (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	1h39m34.4218s
2	**Patricio O'Ward** (MEX)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	+6.1784s
3	**Will Power** (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+20.2822s
4	**Rinus Van Kalmthout** (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+20.3748s
5	**Scott Dixon** (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+21.9744s
6	**Alex Palou** (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
7	**Romain Grosjean** (FRA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
8	**Marcus Ericsson** (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
9	**Graham Rahal** (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
10	**Christian Lundgaard** (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
11	**Jimmie Johnson** (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
12	**Callum Ilott** (GBR)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
13	**Alexander Rossi** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
14	**David Malukas** (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with HMD / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
15	**Kyle Kirkwood** (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
16	**Helio Castroneves** (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
17	**Devlin Defrancesco** (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
18	**Jack Harvey** (GBR)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
19	**Conor Daly** (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
20	**Dalton Kellett** (CAN)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
21	**Takuma Sato** (JPN)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR / Dallara-Honda	-5 laps
22	**Scott McLaughlin** (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	-6 laps
23	**Simon Pagenaud** (FRA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	-6 laps
24	**Colton Herta** (USA)	Andretti Autosport with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	-8 laps
25	**Ed Carpenter** (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	160 laps-accident
26	**Felix Rosenqvist** (SWE)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	109 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 134.674mph. **Fastest lap** **Power** 19.4571s, 165.410mph.

QUALIFYING **1 Power 178.199mph**; 2 **Newgarden** 177.782mph; 3 **Daly** 177.478mph; 4 **O'Ward** 177.421mph; 5 **McLaughlin** 177.253mph; 6 **Malukas** 176.932mph; 7 **Harvey** 176.673mph; 8 **Kalmthout** 176.626mph; 9 **Sato** 176.564mph; 10 **Grosjean** 176.469mph; 11 **Rosenqvist** 176.259mph; 12 **Ericsson** 175.844mph; 13 **Dixon** 175.670mph; 14 **Palou** 175.230mph; 15 **Johnson** 175.205mph; 16 **Rahal** 174.755mph; 17 **Herta** 174.739mph; 18 **Defrancesco** 174.672mph; 19 **Rossi** 174.450mph; 20 **Lundgaard** 173.689mph; 21 **Pagenaud** 173.423mph; 22 **Ilott** 173.416mph; 23 **Carpenter** 173.406mph; 24 **Kirkwood** 172.628mph; 25 **Castroneves** 172.432mph; 26 **Kellett** 172.062mph.

RACE 2 (300 **LAPS** – 268.200 **MILES**)

1 O'Ward 1h54m23.2097s; 2 **Power** +4.2476s; 3 **McLaughlin** +9.4464s; 4 **Dixon** +11.1499s; 5 **Johnson** +12.3251s; 6 **Ericsson** +14.2340s; 7 **Rosenqvist** +17.6887s; 8 **Malukas** +18.3725s; 9 **Grosjean** +19.5576s; 10 **Sato** +20.7325s; 11 **Ilott** +21.4930s; 12 **Herta** -1 lap; 13 **Palou** -1 lap; 14 **Rahal** -1 lap; 15 **Defrancesco** -2 laps; 16 **Daly** -2 laps; 17 **Carpenter** -3 laps; 18 **Rossi** -4 laps; 19 **Kalmthout** -4 laps; 20 **Harvey** -4 laps; 21 **Castroneves** -5 laps; 22 **Kellett** -6 laps; 23 **Pagenaud** -19 laps; 24 **Newgarden** 235 laps-contact; 25 **Kirkwood** 117 laps-contact; 26 **Lundgaard** 112 laps-mechanical.

Winner's average speed 140.681mph. **Fastest lap** **Power** 19.2241s, 167.415mph.

QUALIFYING 1 **Power** 18.0796s; 2 **Newgarden** 18.0907s; 3 **Daly** 18.1536s; 4 **Sato** 18.1545s; 5 **McLaughlin** 18.1550s; 6 **Harvey** 18.1939s; 7 **O'Ward** 18.2214s; 8 **Kalmthout** 18.2217s; 9 **Rosenqvist** 18.2464s; 10 **Grosjean** 18.2550s; 11 **Palou** 18.2737s; 12 **Herta** 18.1293s; 13 **Johnson** 18.3059s; 14 **Malukas** 18.3498s; 15 **Ericsson** 18.3802s; 16 **Pagenaud** 18.4469s; 17 **Lundgaard** 18.4495s; 18 **Dixon** 18.4514s; 19 **Carpenter** 18.4738s; 20 **Kirkwood** 18.5111s; 21 **Rossi** 18.5224s; 22 **Ilott** 18.5289s; 23 **Rahal** 18.5378s; 24 **Castroneves** 18.5881s; 25 **Defrancesco** 18.6035s; 26 **Kellett** 18.6449s.

CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Ericsson 403**; 2 **Power** 395; 3 **Newgarden** 369; 4 **Dixon** 369; 5 **O'Ward** 367; 6 **Palou** 359; 7 **McLaughlin** 317; 8 **Herta** 278; 9 **Rosenqvist** 275; 10 **Rossi** 265.

Ayumu Iwasa joined the F2 winners' circle in the feature race in France

PORTLOCK/2022 FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

Iwasa is a winner as DAMS scores at home

FIA FORMULA 2
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
23-24 JULY
ROUND 9/14

It was finally Ayumu Iwasa's day at the top at Paul Ricard, the DAMS driver taking his maiden Formula 2 victory in the feature race.

Missing out on pole by just 0.006 seconds from Logan Sargeant, having been unable to make it across the line for a fourth qualifying lap, the Japanese driver lined up second for Sunday's race.

He took full advantage of a poor start from the Carlin man and, despite being briefly passed by Jack Doohan, was in control of the race by the end of the first lap, reclaiming the front spot at the North chicane before building a lead.

Despite an early safety car, courtesy of contact between Marcus Armstrong and Dennis Hauger at Turn 12, which ended Hitech driver Armstrong's race, Iwasa fended off the second-placed Australian to hold the lead at the restart.

Home favourite Theo Pourchaire pitted for the hard tyres on lap 10 and emerged in 12th, leading those who had stopped, before Doohan (Virtuosi) and points leader Felipe Drugovich followed suit three laps later.

Heartbreak came for Sargeant on lap 12 of 30, pitting from third before suffering a terminal technical fault that handed back second in the standings to Pourchaire.

A quick pitstop for Iwasa put him back out into the net lead, while Pourchaire and Doohan tussled for second. The Frenchman emerged victorious as Doohan spun at the North chicane, allowing Frederik Vesti into third and flatspotting his tyres.

Drugovich took advantage of the error to snatch fourth from Doohan into the chicane three laps from home but, despite a charge towards Vesti, was unable to catch the Mercedes junior, who sealed third for ART.

The fighting behind him allowed Iwasa to build a huge gap to his rivals, crossing the line 8.6s ahead of Pourchaire, who was 1.3s ahead of his team-mate.

Liam Lawson took the sprint race victory on Saturday, his second win of the season, after snatching the lead from Jehan Daruvala (Prema) with five laps remaining. The Carlin driver, who started second, struggled off the line, losing a place to Armstrong. But he fought back, taking second from the Hitech driver on lap four of 21 before chasing Daruvala.

The gap between Daruvala and Lawson had built to 2.1s in the opening laps, but the New Zealander had slashed it to below a second before racing was neutralised on lap nine.

The safety car was deployed after Enzo Fittipaldi, mounting a charge through the field for Charouz after his pitlane start, made contact with Campos Racing's Roberto Merhi, driving in place of a still-injured Ralph Boschung.

Racing resumed on lap 13, with the order maintained but with Drugovich closing in on Pourchaire for fourth. Lawson finally took the lead three laps later, passing Daruvala at Turn 8.

Three from the end, the order shuffled, with Armstrong and Daruvala tussling, the latter retaining second, before Pourchaire claimed third after forcing Armstrong wide at Le Beausset — an incident that lost him the podium following a 5s post-race penalty.

More bad luck came for Armstrong on the final lap, contact with team-mate Juri Vips dropping him to ninth before a penalty demoted him to 14th.

MEGAN WHITE

Liam Lawson took his second win in the sprint

LENNON/2022 FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

Seven in a row for Chadwick as title awaits

W SERIES
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
23 JULY
ROUND 4/8

Six digits, Jamie? Maybe Chadwick is losing count!

It was a magnificent seven for Jamie Chadwick in W Series last Saturday as she scored yet another win in her charge for a third consecutive title.

Having taken the top step of the podium at every race this season, plus both at the 2021 season finale double-header at Austin, Chadwick continued her domination of the all-female championship.

She lost her pole position to Beitske Visser after receiving a two-place grid drop for crossing the pit exit line, but come race day Chadwick made it past a poor-starting second-placed Nerea Marti off the line before swooping ahead of Visser around the inside of Turn 3.

Marti dropped to fourth, allowing Belen Garcia to make an early move into third.

The first safety car followed almost immediately as Abbie Eaton and Marta Garcia made contact off the line, ending the former's race as soon as it began.

The restart six minutes later was Chadwick's, the double champion getting an early jump on Visser to quickly build a healthy lead. But the racing was neutralised once more after Chloe Chambers and Emely de Heus collided at Turns 3 and 4, the latter having tried to dive down the inside and receiving a 10-second stop/go penalty, while Chambers retired.

Upon the second restart, Visser closed in on the main straight, briefly taking the lead at Turn 1 before Chadwick retook the top spot on the outside of Turn 2.

Towards the halfway mark, Belen Garcia made it past at Turn 5 to take second, while Alice Powell and Fabienne Wohlwend battled for fifth, the Briton taking the position having charged through the field from 11th.

Visser lost third to Marti with less than 10 minutes remaining, running wide at Turn 11, while Chadwick set a fastest lap that was 0.5s quicker than Belen Garcia in second. Although the Spanish driver responded the following tour — getting within 0.028s of Chadwick's best — she still finished 2.4s adrift.

Powell sealed fifth, and is now sixth in the standings, while Marta Garcia settled for sixth after the early contact with Eaton, and Wohlwend came home seventh.

Sarah Moore took eighth, having snatched the position from fellow Briton Abbi Pulling with just two laps remaining.

"I enjoyed that one and it makes up for yesterday," said Chadwick. "Getting pole position and having that taken away, I felt like I needed to make amends today.

"I'm really happy. Beitske [Visser] kept me honest initially and I moved back after the safety car, so I'm happy that I got my head down after that and it feels great to get another win."

Chadwick could seal the title in Hungary this weekend, having scored a perfect 125 points, and no one else has won a W Series race since September 2021. Pulling and Visser trail in second and third, with 55 and 53 points respectively.

MEGAN WHITE

WEEKEND WINNERS

FIA FORMULA 2
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
Race 1 Liam Lawson Carlin
Race 2 Ayumu Iwasa DAMS

W SERIES
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
Jamie Chadwick

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The double champion (55) wasted little time making up for her penalty

Nestor Girolami's second win of the season lifted him back into title hunt

WTCR/DPPI

Cyan pulls its Lynk & Cos as Azcona makes hay…

WTCR
VALLELUNGA (ITA)
24 JULY
ROUND 6/10

Cyan Racing took a stand in Italy last weekend that likely ruled its drivers Santi Urrutia and Yann Ehrlacher out from winning the World Touring Car Cup this season. As the Lynk & Cos were dramatically pulled from competition, Munnich Motorsport Honda's Nestor Girolami and Comtoyou Audi's Gilles Magnus grabbed their second wins of 2022, while BRC Hyundai's Mikel Azcona tightened his grip on a likely first world crown.

From the test session on Friday, Cyan knew its five Lynk & Cos were in trouble. By far the heaviest cars thanks to their hefty compensation weight, the 03 TCRs were 80kg over Azcona's unburdened Elantra. Yvan Muller had already been vocal about the unfairness of Balance of Performance, and his mood darkened after an alarming crash at the high-speed Turn 2 in practice, caused by a left-front puncture. Two months after the Nurburgring Nordschleife race cancellations, the WTCR was thrown into new Goodyear tyre turmoil.

After qualifying poorly and claiming to be unable to complete a race distance safely, Cyan threatened a withdrawal unless action

Azcona heads Berthon and Magnus in race one

WTCR/DPPI

was taken. When it wasn't, the five blue cars headed for the pits at the end of the race-one formation lap. Up front, Girolami and Azcona fought door to door down to Turn 4 before the Hyundai finally ceded to the Honda and the drivers went into tyre and temperature management mode in the searingly hot conditions. When a spate of punctures for a number of cars further decimated the field, Cyan's stand carried greater resonance — although the cause of the failures remained open to question. Kerb strikes or something more fundamental? Whatever, it spelled the same sorry story for Nathanael Berthon, who suffered his own left-front failure at Turn 2 and lost a podium. At least another Audi, that of Magnus, picked up his third place.

Reigning double champion Ehrlacher and Urrutia were due to start the partially reversed-grid race two from the front row. But once again, in came the Lynk & Cos at the end of the formation lap. Ehrlacher watched from the pitwall still wearing his helmet, perhaps bidding adieu to his hopes of a title hat-trick. Given the team orders fiasco that played out between the pair in Vila Real, when Urrutia was anointed a victory he hadn't earned, the withdrawal left an open question how this one would have been handled by the politically spiky Swedish team.

Instead, the Lynk & Cos left an open goal for Comtoyou Audi, Magnus converting what became an effective pole position into a second race victory of 2022, having seen off team-mate Mehdi Bennani at the start. The Moroccan slipped to fourth as Attila Tassi and Berthon shot past — but both Tassi and Bennani fell victim to punctures. Berthon survived to make it an Audi 1-2 and enjoy the podium he'd lost earlier in the day, while Azcona picked up his second WTCR Vallelunga rostrum. From a scant 16 points ahead of Urrutia, he now leads Girolami by a commanding 36. Rob Huff, troubled by differential problems in qualifying, is third, Magnus is next — and Urrutia and Ehrlacher are 63 and 67 points respectively off the lead. Safety first? Always. But Cyan's defiant stand has come at a price.

DAMIEN SMITH

…and doubles up to become king of Rome

ETCR
VALLELUNGA (ITA)
24 JULY
ROUND 5/6

Mikel Azcona proved his prowess whatever the power source as he took his first ETCR eTouring Car World Cup King of the Weekend win at a searing hot Vallelunga, on a weekend of double-duties across ETCR and WTCR.

Though both Azcona's two cars and the race formats are very different, he faced a similar issue regardless of propulsion, as Goodyear withstood a challenging weekend of tyre delaminations, depressurisations and tread and carcass dispersions, affecting seemingly the entire grid.

But the most dramatic incident in the ETCR was an as-yet unspecified problem that sent Bruno Spengler's Romeo Ferraris Giulia off in the first Super Final, pitching the Canadian into a high-speed spin though the gravel, partially airborne and into the tyre barriers, and thereafter to a local hospital for a diagnosis of a mild fracture to his T6 thoracic vertebra.

This crash came not long after Spengler and Azcona had clashed for ascendency heading into T1, during which there was a degree of contact. Initial reports suggested a left-rear tyre failure had been the cause of Spengler's crash, although Goodyear has clarified that was not the case.

Spengler's car should have been used later by team-mate Maxime Martin – winner last time out at Zolder – who like Azcona had enjoyed a perfect points score in his pool. But with the car no longer fit for purpose Martin would be a mere spectator and the squad withdrew

Goodyear tyre failures were a theme in ETCR too

ETCR

Mikel Azcona was all smiles after a profitable weekend's work in Italy

ETCR

Giovanni Venturini from his final too.

The Hyundai squad looked set for a double Super Final win tally as Nicky Catsburg dominated the now Romeo Ferraris-lacking race, stretching a two-second lead from Mattias Ekstrom in his Cupra. But with a handful of corners left it was catastrophe for Catsburg with – wait for it – a left-rear tyre delamination. Ekstrom took an unexpected win.

Azcona's weekend win was the first for his Hyundai Motorsport N squad this season and the points haul means the German-based Korean team has nudged two points ahead of Romeo Ferraris on their home ground. Cupra EKS still has a healthy lead, with 876 points to Hyundai's 629.

"This is an incredible feeling," said Azcona. "I have wanted to achieve this result with Hyundai for a long time this season. It is a very positive moment, we have made a good improvement as a team and maximised everything from the car."

A confident Azcona will head to the next round – wherever that may be – after moving into third in the drivers' standings with 368 points. Adrien Tambay's Vallalunga luck didn't hold and the Frenchman finished fourth in the weekend standings, but retains the series lead with 435 points to Ekstrom's 421.

"I think we have plenty of opportunities ahead of us in the next events to fight for this result again," confirmed Azcona.

Currently the remainder of the ETCR's calendar remains in a state of TBC, with two races in Europe the expectation following an FIA decision that Asian races would be off the agenda for 2022. An announcement of where next is expected in the near future.

JAMES WATT

WEEKEND WINNERS

WTCR
VALLELUNGA (ITA)
Race 1 Nestor Girolami
Munnich Motorsport (Honda)
Race 2 Gilles Magnus
Comtoyou (Audi)

ETCR
VALLELUNGA (ITA)
Mikel Azcona
Hyundai Motorsport N (Hyundai)

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Elliott handed win after twin disqualification

NASCAR CUP
POCONO (USA)
24 JULY
ROUND 21/36

Chase Elliott won without leading a lap at Pocono
BAKER

Chase Elliott inherited victory at Pocono after finishing third on the road when Denny Hamlin and Kyle Busch were disqualified in the post-race car inspection.

"There were some issues discovered that affected aero in the vehicles," said NASCAR boss Brad Moran. "The part was the front fascia. There really was no reason why there was material somewhere where it shouldn't have been." It is the first time a Cup race winner has been disqualified since NASCAR implemented its new post-race inspection rules in 2019 and means Elliott is credited with a win, his fourth of the season, despite having never led a lap.

On the road, Hamlin had edged his Joe Gibbs Racing team-mate Kyle Busch by 0.927 seconds while trying to save fuel to earn his third NASCAR Cup victory of 2022. The close finish on fuel was just one element of a very eventful race for Hamlin.

He started on pole position and tagged the Turn 1 wall on the first lap. He spun off at Turn 2 on lap 41 of 160 to bring out a caution. On a restart on lap 143, Hamlin ran Ross Chastain into the wall in a battle to take the lead, then on the ensuing restart held off Busch over the final 13 laps.

Chastain and Hamlin have had multiple run-ins on track this season, with Hamlin promising payback was coming at a moment of his choosing. Asked if Sunday's incident was that moment, Hamlin said: "What did you expect me to do? We got position on him and he just ran out of race track. We're going to just keep racing hard until we get the respect back from these guys. We've been wrecked four times – twice while leading – in the last 10 months and I'm just at the end of it."

The double disqualification promoted Tyler Reddick and Daniel Suarez to second and third respectively.

JIM UTTER

Rookie winner parks the Buus

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
24 JULY
ROUND 5/8

Porsche Supercup rookie Bastian Buus converted pole position at Paul Ricard into a maiden series victory. The Dane fended off Lechner team-mate Harry King on the run into Turn 1 off the line to take the lead, before a safety car was called for Loek Hartog's stricken Ombra SLR car after a spin at Turn 5.

When racing resumed on lap four of 13, Buus nailed the restart to build up a comfortable gap of almost a second as King came under fire from reigning champion Larry ten Voorde over second.

Britain's King broke away from the Team GP Elite driver in the latter stages and carved into team-mate Buus's lead in the final laps, the latter almost losing the rear into the last corner on the final tour. It wasn't enough to allow King to break his duck, with Buus holding on by 0.451s.

Championship leader Dylan Pereira endured a difficult race at Paul Ricard, as the third Lechner car dropped behind ten Voorde off the line and was cast adrift of the podium battle after the safety car period.

Pereira clattered into ten Voorde trying to take third back from him at the last corner on lap five and failed, opening himself up to attack from Laurin Heinrich (Huber Racing). Heinrich demoted Periera to fifth, which would remain the order to the chequered flag, only to fall behind to a track limits penalty. Pereira thus heads Heinrich by four points as 12 covers the top four drivers with three races to go.

LEWIS DUNCAN

Lechner team-mates in the pink at Paul Ricard
PORSCHE AG / HOCH ZWEI

WEEKEND WINNERS

NASCAR CUP
POCONO (USA)
Chase Elliott
Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet Camaro)

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
Bastian Buus (below)
Lechner Racing

INDY LIGHTS
IOWA (USA)
Hunter McElrea
Andretti Autosport

PORSCHE AG / HOCH ZWEI

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PARTNERS IN INNOVATION

A global partner of Formula E since its foundation, Julius Baer's involvement in the all-electric championship yields continued benefits for both parties

"It's not enough only to say we see the trends, we also invest in the trends. Formula E is for us an excellent story we can have when advising clients, showing that Julius Baer can anticipate trends that are worth investing in. Formula E creates our credibility."

That, in a nutshell, explains the ongoing value that leading Swiss-based banking institution Julius Baer gains from its involvement from the beginning with Formula E. Now in its eighth season, the world championship for electric single-seater racing cars began in Beijing in 2014 with a disruptive product that brimmed with potential, but was also considered high-risk. Nothing like it had been attempted before. And that's where Julius Baer came in.

A provider of wealth management services and investment advice to clients for over 130 years, Julius Baer's takeover of Merrill Lynch's international wealth management business in 2012 marked a key point in the company's continued growth.

And when Swiss-Italian automotive industry veteran Marco Parroni joined Julius Baer in 2013 from Ferrari as head of global brand programmes, partnerships and sponsoring, he was tasked with finding a first-rate global platform to increase brand awareness that also shared the bank's values. Meanwhile, Formula E founder Alejandro Agag was on the lookout for a forward-thinking partner who was prepared to buy into its evolutionary mantra and give it the credibility to approach OEMs. For Parroni, the two were a "perfect match because it was new, with a lot of risk, but a lot of benefits too".

"Julius Baer is well known as a bank with values such as innovation, sustainability and pioneering spirit," he says. "Formula E came in the right moment, because it was exactly what was important to us – a global platform to promote electric mobility for a better, more sustainable future. These were the elements that convinced us to invest and to support Formula E in an early stage."

Parroni leads Julius Baer's FE involvement

Parroni's confidence was vindicated by the success of its first season that proved the viability of Agag's vision and hinted at a bright future. To Julius Baer's entrepreneurial customers, he believes the show of faith demonstrates "not only a vision but created a proof point" of the bank's *raison d'être*.

Since then, there have been many highlights, seeing the Julius Baer brand front and centre at Monaco in 2015 and the "dream come true" achievement in 2018 of returning motorsport to Switzerland – 63 years after the 1955 Le Mans tragedy that led to a ban on motorsport in the country – with a street race in the heart of Zurich. Parroni was heavily involved in bringing the project to life in Julius Baer's home market, and regards it as "the biggest highlight in Julius Baer's Formula E story".

"In the beginning it was so risky to support, but the race was sold out," he says.

Current Gen2 cars will be replaced for 2023

Parroni believes FE is the place to be for OEMs

"WHEN YOU SEE THE OEMS' STRATEGY, IT'S 100% ELECTRIC. FORMULA E TECHNOLOGY IS EXACTLY THE TECHNOLOGY YOU WILL FIND ON THE ROAD CAR"

Since those early days of mid-race car swaps, Formula E has gone from strength to strength. The current Gen-2 cars that have been in service since the 2018-19 season allowed the series to consolidate with futuristic-looking racers capable of running a full 45-minute plus one lap race distance on a single battery charge. And the new Gen3 cars that will replace them later this year are set to be faster, lighter and utilising more sustainable materials than ever, continuing to underline Formula E's dedication to pushing the envelope with technological innovation.

Julius Baer's input has been important too thanks to Parroni's role on Formula E's global advisory board. Together with other key industry stakeholders, this has helped to shape the championship's technology and sporting roadmap in a way that maximises its appeal to OEMs, rights-holders, broadcasters and fans alike.

The arrival of luxury brand Maserati and Formula 1 squad McLaren, plus the return of top German tuning company Abt, for Gen3 gives Parroni optimism that Formula E's near future will live up to its story of success, and continue to provide opportunities for OEMs to transfer technology into their automotive products.

"It's important Formula E remains a reference in electric motorsport for OEMs," says Parroni. "Gen3 goes to the next level and Formula E wants to show how technology can be evolved and transferred to road cars. In the past Formula 1 was exactly this, which is why it attracted so many OEMs. Formula E must do the same.

"Formula E is still a young motorsport series and when you see the strategy from the OEMs, it's 100% electric. The Formula E technology is exactly the technology you will find on the road car.

"Now with Gen3, Formula E must demonstrate that it is going the right way and that it's important to be part of this evolution. The Stellantis Group will be electric by 2027, so it absolutely makes sense for OEMs to be in Formula E."

As more series rush to incorporate electric components in their powertrains, or electrify altogether, Parroni recognises that the landscape will become increasingly competitive. But Formula E's exclusive license to run an FIA-recognised electric single-seater series extends to 2039, which means it is in a strong position to remain at the head of the pack as the ultimate destination for pioneers to make their mark. And as it has done since the beginning, Julius Baer will be right there too.

COMPARING AUDI'S DTM HEAVYWEIGHT DRIVERS

The GT3-based DTM is a different proposition to the Class 1 era that ended in 2020, but Audi's top protagonists remain the same. Team Rosberg and Abt engineers reveal what make rivals Rene Rast and Nico Muller tick

JAMES NEWBOLD

Advantage Rast at Imola, and he's currently third in the points, one place ahead of Muller

"It's a different championship compared to what I was used to before," says three-time DTM champion Rene Rast of the series' GT3 era. "These cars have ABS, they have traction control, they have less aero, more weight, completely different driving style."

A whole new world to the prototype-esque Class 1 machines they may be, but in GT3 cars the DTM's cream of the crop is still apparent. That was attested at Imola where Audi's two top names from the Class 1 period, Rast and Nico Muller, lined up together on the front row and finished in that order as Rast took his first win since returning from a year in Formula E.

But there's another key difference to 2020, and that's the teams the pair are driving for. They have swapped camps, with Muller — Rast's closest title rival in 2019 and 2020 — now firmly ensconced as part of the Team Rosberg crew with which Rast won each of his titles in 2017, 2019 and 2020. Rast meanwhile has joined Abt and is now working closely with Muller's former engineer Felix Fechner, the pair having been thrust together last year in the unfamiliar surroundings of FE in what turned out to be Audi's final year prior to pulling out.

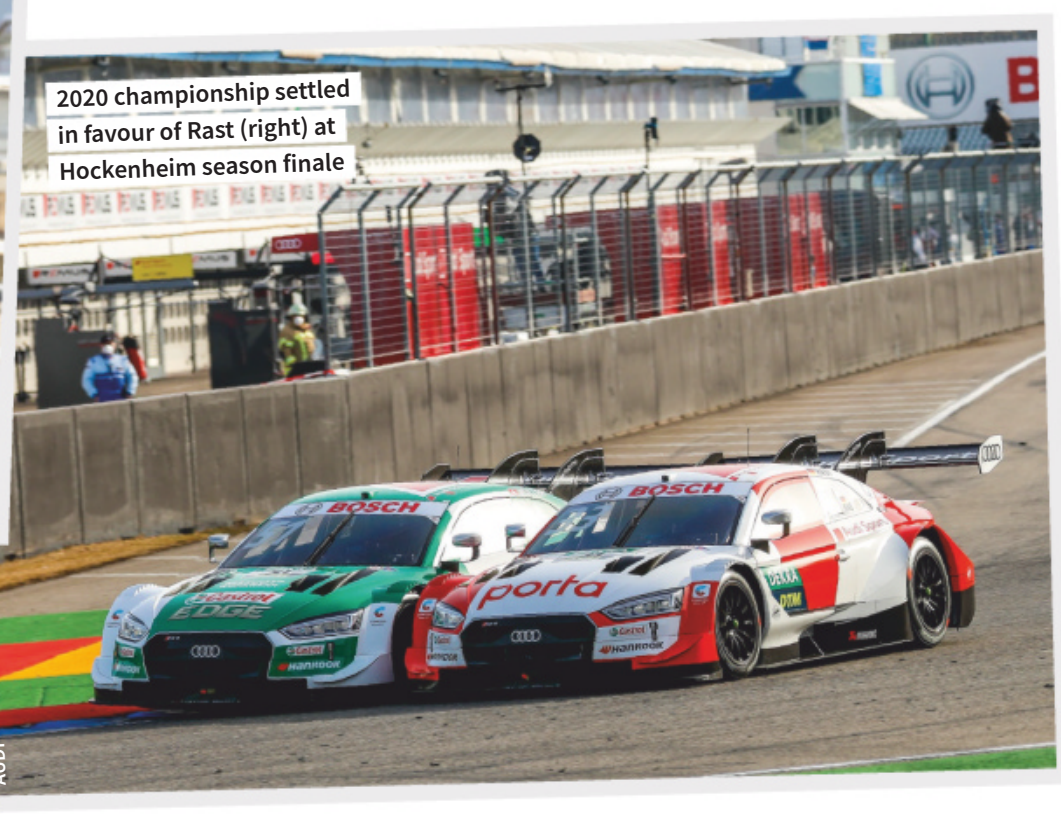
That means that Fechner, Rosberg technical director Florian Rinkes (formerly Rast's race engineer, who performed that duty for Muller in 2021) and Muller's race engineer Davide Maino (previously Rast's data engineer) are uniquely placed to judge the merits, similarities and differences between Audi's two top performers in the 2022 DTM so far.

Rast lies third at the halfway point of the season, 10 points shy of championship leader Mirko Bortolotti (Grasser Lamborghini), with Muller a further 17 behind in fourth after a pointless weekend at the Norisring — where Rast survived the chaos to claim two third places. Muller also has a win to his name this year, the Swiss breaking through in Portimao as Rast drew a blank on his return.

For Rinkes, that triumph was particularly satisfying after a barren 2021 season as Rosberg struggled to get to grips with the switch to GT3 machinery. Muller's best finish was second at Monza, his only podium all year, as he finished 10th in the standings. But Rinkes says he never resorted to finger-pointing as the team worked through its "steep learning curve".

Audi's open ethos in Class 1 era meant Rast and Muller (right) knew how each other worked

AUDI



2020 championship settled in favour of Rast (right) at Hockenheim season finale

AUDI

DTM

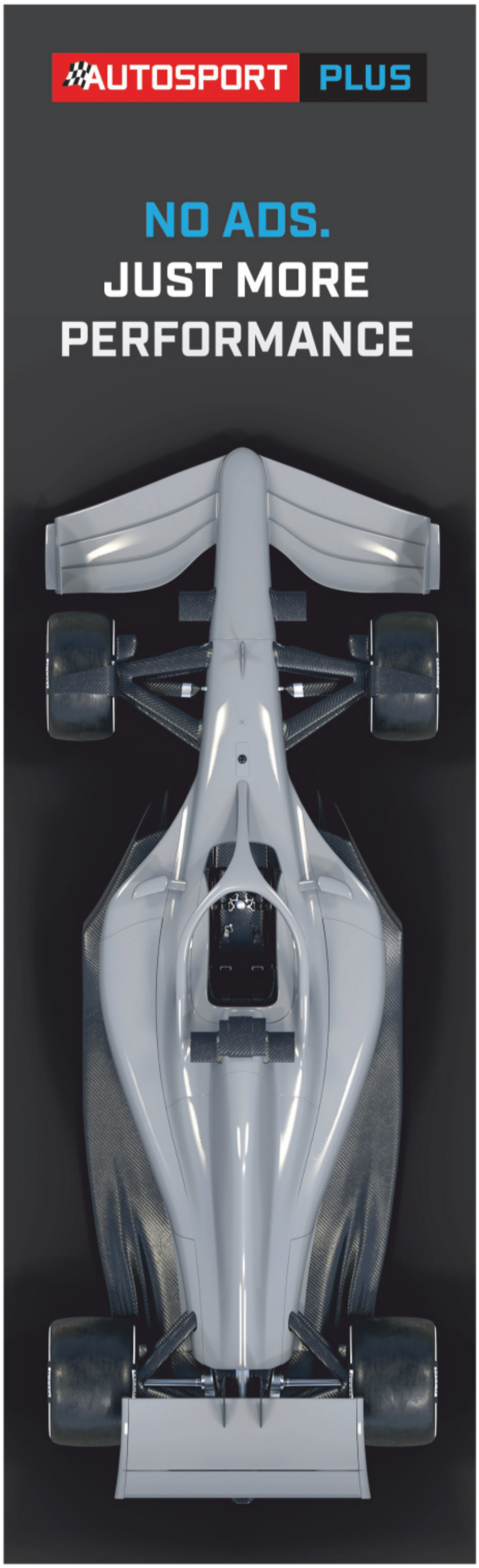
"THEY ARE PRETTY SIMILAR, THEY MAKE THE LIFE OF THE ENGINEER EASIER SOMETIMES"

"A lot of things which worked with the Class 1 cars is absolutely different," he says. "Nico was in this respect quite honest that some approaches from us may not work, some approaches from him didn't work and then we tried to support each other to get back on top. There was always a kind of positive working attitude."

That comes as no surprise to Fechner, who began working with Muller in 2018. The former Dragon Formula E racer was the first driver he was responsible for race engineering and says "the time with Nico was influencing a lot my way of engineering the car". Together they built up a tight-knit partnership, Fechner recalling "we were just talking on the same level".

"He was pushing to check data himself and to be able to speak the same language [as the engineers]," Fechner says of Muller. "Then he is very linked to his mechanics, so he builds up a relationship which makes the team motivated the extra 10%. After a session, if you ask for a smaller change which takes a lot of time, they will do it without any questions or any bad feelings."

In that respect, Fechner identifies a clear similarity between the pair, explaining that Muller and Rast have the same priorities. »



Team Rosberg's Maino (left) and Rinkes (right) praise Rast's work ethic

"They are pretty similar, because they make the life of the engineer easier sometimes," he says.

Having viewed Rast as his biggest rival during his time with Muller, Fechner was intrigued to work together in Formula E and says he "saw it always as a great opportunity to learn what we were missing in these three years".

"In the end, if you see Rene working, you don't need to hide to have lost against him," reckons Fechner, who believes that Abt splitting its points between Muller and team-mate Robin Frijns in 2020 – the Dutchman finishing third and taking points off Muller at key intervals in a season where Audi and BMW agreed not to use team orders – proved crucial as Rast overhauled Muller's early points lead.

"Each driver had an advantage compared to the other one, then it's always these small, small details which are then mattering," acknowledges Rinkes, agreeing when Autosport suggests both would have been equally deserving champions in 2020.

Maino says working with Rast during his run of titles – having only been beaten over a full year by Gary Paffett in Mercedes' 2018 swansong, the Briton eking out four more points as Rast finished runner-up after a flurry of late wins aided by Audi team orders – "was a pleasure" and reckons his work rate set him apart from the rest at the time.

"His work method today in 2022 is quite normal, but at the time it wasn't," he says. "He was a guy who brought something new in the environment, at least for what I saw the previous season. He was the first guy who really put huge effort into looking at other people's data.

"In my experience before him, drivers were staying one, maybe two hours and at 8pm going back to the hotel. Rene was the first driver I met that was pushing the limits, looking at the data of all the Audis and all the onboards available.

"He wanted us to record every possible onboard of any car, also BMW, also Mercedes, so he was checking every single onboard available until midnight. And this was the baseline. The session was over at 6pm maybe, until midnight he was there looking for anything, was going back to the hotel, still working and texting you at 1am."

Rast's attention to detail, Rinkes explains, meant "you have to have a quite honest relationship with him". "Because he's so much in the detail, you cannot really hide anything," says Rinkes. "You need to have an open relationship where you say, 'OK, I can help you and do certain things with the car but this and this you have it yourself by driving'.

"They have slightly different needs and slightly different natural driving styles, so they ask for a bit of different stuff, but they are both clear which direction they would like to take. They have a clear goal and they can give really detailed and good feedback if you are getting there, if you are getting closer [to the desired set-up]."

Rivals began to cotton on after he won the championship and

Muller's former engineer Fechner says both drivers are class acts

AUDI

DTM

Polestarter Muller dominated second race at Portimao

studied what Rast was doing. It became "an Audi standard", says Maino, who regards working with Muller now as "familiar from day one because I was just doing what I was used to".

The pair converse in English in team meetings, but away from the track catch up in Maino's native Italian about "normal stuff", which he says gives them "a deeper human connection outside the race weekend". "But in the race weekend, there's really no difference between Rene and Nico," says Maino.

Audi had a "completely open" collaborative approach during the Class 1 era, Fechner explains, with data shared between the different teams, which meant engineers and drivers knew the working methods, strengths and weaknesses of their rivals already.

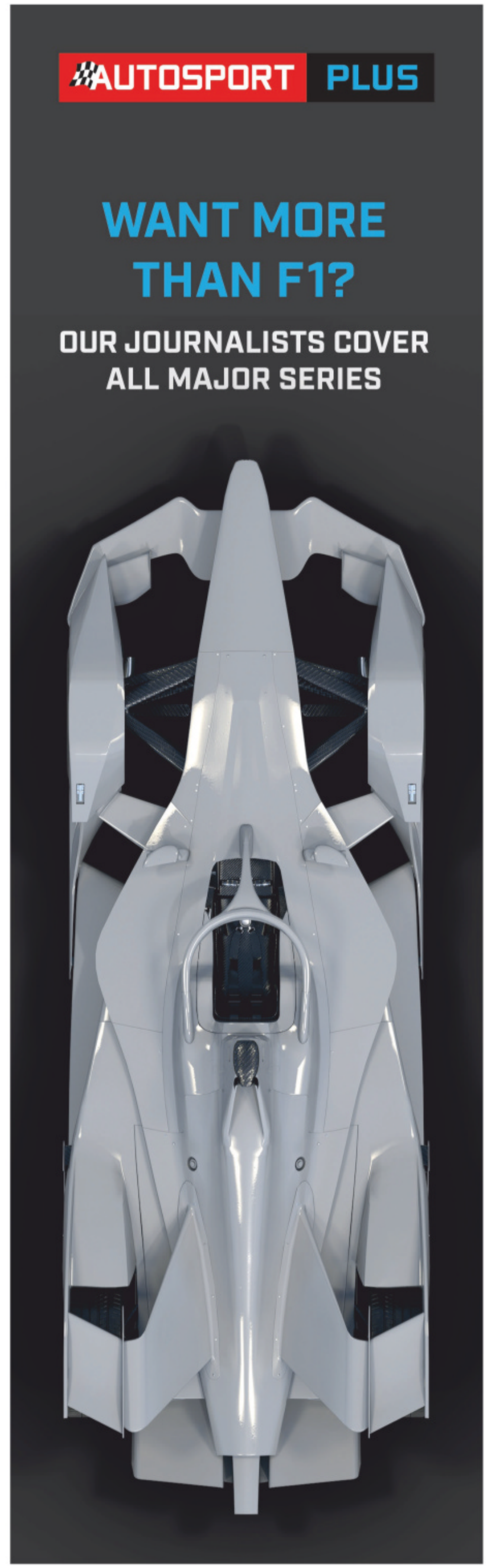
"We were still having meetings together, so I knew already what Rene was asking for," says Fechner, who explains that as a result "there was not one single element that surprised me" when he started working with Rast. And the same applied for Rinkes with Muller.

"We knew him as a driver quite well from all the data studies we do, he was over the years the closest rival to Rene so we have a lot of data overlays between both of them," he says.

In the end, says Fechner, both are class acts working towards the same goal. "The only difference you could say is that Rene already won the DTM championship and Nico not yet," he says. "In the Formula 1 Netflix series [*Drive to Survive*], there is one line from Toto Wolff where he described the difference between Hamilton and Bottas, where he said 'there is a difference between thinking you can win, and knowing you can win'. But I would not see many differences between them as a driver.

"The environment, the surroundings, the cars, and the competition is completely different and you cannot compare it at all to the old DTM. But no matter in which team they are, they know how to form the team around them that performs. This I definitely see as a privilege!"

Reflecting on the "very healthy" rivalry between the Abt and Rosberg squads, Maino adds: "It's nice that we are still there after a big change in rules. In the end they are still head-to-head, in Imola it was their side, in Portimao it was our side. We're looking forward to the future." As are all of us watching on...



Franco-Argentinian Fenestraz has the chance to establish himself as a fixture on the Japanese racing scene – or might Formula E or WEC come calling?

SACHA FENESTRAZ

SUCCEEDING IN THE COVID HANGOVER

Ex-Renault F1 protege Sacha Fenestraz's bid to make it big in Japan was put on ice by the country's COVID protocols. But he's now a race winner at the top level

JAMIE KLEIN

Sacha Fenestraz is far from the first driver to have moved to Japan after running out of opportunities in Europe, and he won't be the last either. But, after scoring his first win in Super Formula in June's Sugo round, it's safe to say that the move is working out. Just a few short years ago, Fenestraz had been placed on the Renault F1 junior scheme scrapheap, his career hanging in the balance. And now he appears well-placed to challenge for his first Super Formula title, potentially even as early as this season.

Granted, Fenestraz needed until the midpoint of his third campaign to add himself to the Super Formula winners' list. But doing so in his 14th start in Japan's top single-seater series is broadly in line with the *gaijin* racers he's trying to emulate: Nick Cassidy took 10 goes at it, Andre Lotterer needed 13, and Joao Paulo de Oliveira had to wait until his 19th start. And that overlooks the gaping five-race hole Fenestraz has in his Super Formula CV for most of last year, which was the result of visa issues and Japan's ultra-strict travel restrictions during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which are only just loosening now.

Indeed, this chat with Fenestraz in Dubai airport — by complete accident, Autosport booked the same flight back to Europe as the subject of this interview — would have been unthinkable this time a year ago, when the now 22-year-old was able to do little more than wait to be allowed back into Japan. It was a wait that ended up taking the best part of nine painful months.

"Mileage-wise, I wouldn't say I am a rookie, but I am fairly inexperienced," Fenestraz reflects, also noting how his rookie campaign was plagued by on-track incidents not of his making and more than his fair share of mechanical problems. "The 2020 season was almost a joke in terms of everything that happened; I think I only had one race with no issues. It was pure bad luck all season. And in 2021 I couldn't enter Japan until the last two races. If I look at the whole picture, it's a great result and I'm happy, but maybe some people from the outside say, 'Oh, Sacha has been in Japan

ISHIHARA
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Breakthrough Super Formula victory came at Sugo last month

for three years and only just won a race'. It can look like that, but when you know what you went through, it's pretty cool."

From the start of 2022, things were looking up not only for Fenestraz but the Kondo Racing camp in general, including his team-mate Kenta Yamashita. All of the Toyota teams have been enjoying more competitiveness against their Honda-powered rivals thanks to an upturn in engine performance this year, but for Kondo the difference from 2021 — when it toiled to a miserable ninth in the teams' standings — is especially stark. A lot of that can be attributed to Fenestraz simply being there from the start, because Yamashita was missing a team-mate that could push him forward for most of last year.

"It's not just because I'm back, but it's maybe one of the reasons, because me and Kenta can push each other a lot," says the Franco-Argentinian. "Kenta didn't have that last year, because the person replacing me [Yuichi Nakayama] didn't have the same speed, so Kenta didn't have anything to compare himself to. And I feel like Kenta is the sort of driver who needs someone to be fighting against to push himself more. Also the team has more motivation and they know the combination between Kenta and I can be really strong.

"It's also partly down to me making a lot of meetings between races and pushing the team to share more information. In 2020, it felt like two one-car teams; the engineers didn't share anything between them. I really tried to change that. I understand the Japanese engineers have a lot of respect for each other and they try not to copy each other, but if we want to fight for the

"THE ENGINEERS DIDN'T SHARE ANYTHING BETWEEN THEM. I REALLY TRIED TO CHANGE THAT"

ISHIHARA/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Fenestraz won the Japanese Formula 3 championship in 2019

championship, we need to work as a team and share information — otherwise why have two cars? I've been pushing for that and it is slowly changing. All of that together helps, and it's these small things that make a big difference in the long run."

For any European driver heading to Japan, the language barrier is an inevitable complication, but this can be more or less of a problem depending which team you drive for. At a team like TOM'S, where many of the staff speak English, things will be easier than they are at somewhere like Kondo, where Fenestraz has had to struggle communicating with his race engineer Takuji Murata, who doesn't really speak English at all, since last year.

Fenestraz made a serious effort to learn the local lingo in his debut season, but during his exile last year it was understandable that his zest for studying Japanese dwindled. Help arrived at the start of 2022 in the form of Japanese racing veteran Michael Krumm, who is able to act as a bridge and allow Fenestraz to focus on what really matters: driving. "With Michael, I can talk »

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completely openly, whereas before I could only use 'easy' words," he explains. "Now I don't have to worry about the guy not understanding and Michael just translates everything into Japanese. Actually, it was [TOM'S owner Nobuhide] Tachi who proposed it. We have a great relationship, so when I told him I needed someone to translate, even if it's for a different team, he arranged it with Kondo and helped me out."

Where Fenestraz's career goes from here is an interesting question. He could end up like 2019 Super Formula champion Cassidy and simply up sticks whenever a better opportunity

"IT'S CRAZY TO THINK WE HAVE A CHANCE, BUT THAT'S THE REALITY. I THINK WE DO HAVE A SHOT AT IT"

Six podium finishes clocked up in Super GT since 2020

ISHIHARA motorsport IMAGES

presents itself, and as a reserve driver for Jaguar in Formula E (he was first to drive the British marque's Gen3 car in testing), following Cassidy into the all-electric series would appear to be the most obvious alternative to what he's doing now. But Fenestraz insists he wouldn't simply go for the money, and would only consider driving for a proven top team.

With that in mind, Fenestraz also has the chance to establish himself as a more permanent fixture on the Japanese scene in the mould of Lotterer, Loic Duval or Benoit Treluyer, all of whom won titles in both Super Formula and Super GT before being picked up to race in the FIA World Endurance Championship by Audi.

Fenestraz, indeed, is also now an established part of the TOM'S line-up in Super GT, and has scored six podiums since 2020. Considering endurance racing's forthcoming boom, it's certainly possible that Fenestraz's career could unfold in similar fashion.

But all of that is in the future. For now, there's the question of a title to go out and win, although following an unfortunate crash in the recent sixth round at Fuji the gap to championship leader Tomoki Nojiri stands at a daunting 36 points with four races left.

Fenestraz is reminded that, if he overcomes the odds and beats Nojiri, he'd become Kondo Racing's first ever Super Formula drivers' champion. He hesitates before responding: "I never thought about that... My heart is beating faster now that you mention it! That would be amazing. It's crazy to think we have a chance, but that's the reality. I want to keep pushing the team a lot, because it's working well, everyone is pushing in the right direction. If we don't have any more mechanical issues, I think we do have a shot at it. It's exciting!"

GIULIANO ALESI
STRUGGLING TO TURN THINGS AROUND

If the season so far has been a good one for Fenestraz, it's been a nightmare for the only other non-Japanese driver on the Super Formula grid this year: Giuliano Alesi.

It was last year when Alesi moved to Japan after being spat out by the Formula 1 support paddock, with TOM'S offering him a drive in the second-tier Super Formula Lights series. With COVID keeping Toyota WEC star Kazuki Nakajima away from the paddock for most of the year, Alesi also made five starts in the top category with the Toyota squad, notably winning in just his second Super Formula start in torrential conditions at Autopolis.

That rain-soaked day in Kyushu must now feel like the most distant of memories given how this year has gone so far. In six races, Alesi has mustered just a single points finish of eighth, and has been comprehensively outperformed by team-mate Ritomo Miyata.

Alesi's race engineer Kenta Odachi explained earlier this year that his driver was pursuing a very different set-up path to Miyata, based on his tendency to brake very late and aggressively – a habit picked up driving the much heavier F2 car. Given Miyata has qualified in the top four for every dry race this year, and Alesi's best grid slot is ninth, it's probably time that the son of F1 cult idol Jean made a bigger effort to adapt his driving.

SUPERFORMULA

Alesi has managed just one points finish this season

SUPERFORMULA

Relations between Alesi and TOM'S are said to be strained, not helped by the Frenchman's struggles upon his step up to Super GT's top GT500 class. Only a big result in the final two double-header weekends of the season at Motegi and Suzuka can ease the pressure.

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An Escort rival at last

The Fiat threatening Ford's historic rallying dominance

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Fiat versus Ford – four decades later

Ford Escorts have dominated historic rallying for years but finally, in the shape of a Fiat 131, they face some tough opposition from an old foe

PAUL LAWRENCE

PHOTOGRAPHY **BEN AND PAUL LAWRENCE**

The combination of reigning British Rally champion Matt Edwards and a Fiat 131 from Rallysport Development is reshaping the British historic rallying landscape after more than a decade of Ford Escort domination. Victory in the British Historic Rally Championship, with three events to run in the early autumn, is a real possibility.

Those around rallying in the late 1970s will remember the time when co-driver Christian Geistdorfer sat in the back of the works Fiat 131 while Walter Rohrl sat up front. It was all about weight distribution and the practice was quickly outlawed after the 1978 RAC Rally. Reputedly, team manager Giorgio Pianta reckoned the move was worth a second per mile.

What cannot be disputed is that in the Group 4 rallying era the 131 was a match for the Ford Escort Mk2. Fiat's 131 Abarth took the World Rally Championship manufacturers' title three times in 1977, 1978 and 1980 to the single crown for the Escort Mk2 in 1979. The drivers' title tally was two each (if you count the FIA Cup): Markku Alen and Rohrl for Fiat, Bjorn Waldegard and Ari Vatanen for Ford.

Despite its period parity with the Escort Mk2, the Fiat has been largely absent as UK historic rallying developed over the last quarter of a century. The last non-Ford Escort driver to win the British Historic title was the late Dessie Nutt back in 2009 with his 1967 Porsche 911. That was at a time when the scoring system favoured the older cars.

While Ford Escorts, notably Group 4 Mk2s with BDG engines, have routinely won most events, there was a landmark moment this spring when Edwards won the historic element of Rally North Wales

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The Escort has been all-conquering in historic rallying, but that domination could now be over

"We machine all the engine parts except the cylinder block, so it's a massive task"

in a 131. That dusty day marked a high point in a story covering the better part of a decade as the dogged determination of one man and his team to make the Fiat a winner was finally rewarded.

The pioneer for bringing the 131 to the forefront of historic rallying is Kevin Theaker, the man behind Malton-based Rallysport Development. He decided it was time something other than an Escort led the way in historic rallying and many hours were spent gathering photographs, drawings and ex-works components to help turn a dream into a reality. This was a project that bubbled away, showing signs of promise but not scoring a breakthrough result until this year.

The Group 4 Escort is supported by an infrastructure of specialist suppliers, with most parts available off the shelf. That's one of the main reasons the Escort is so popular in historic rallying. Others have tried with the Vauxhall Chevette and the Talbot Sunbeam Lotus, but the Escort stranglehold remained resolute.

When turning the 131 into a rally winner, Fiat pretty much started from scratch. The rigid rear axle was replaced by independent suspension complete with MacPherson struts. The gearbox was boosted up to five gears and disc brakes were added all round. The 16-valve cylinder head was reworked and even the bodywork was radically changed with fibreglass panels. The humble Mirafiori was transformed into a proper rally car, ready for homologation into Group 4. Recreating that specification is the task that RSD took on.

UK rallying's long COVID-enforced break allowed Theaker and his team to fully focus on the Fiat project. Theaker knew what he was up against as he had built and run pacesetting Escorts for some of the grandees of historic rallying — notably, Matthew Robinson, Nick Elliott and Steve Bannister had all enjoyed success in Malton missiles.

However, winning with an Escort was not enough for Theaker. He wanted to bring the 131 back to life, reasoning that if it had been good enough to beat the Escort back in the day, then it could do so again. Of course, there was a big rider. Very little in the way of rallying parts for a 131 were available. Undeterred, Theaker accumulated what he could and set about machining what he needed.

"We machine all the engine parts except the cylinder block and we make the whole engine," he says. "So it's a massive task. Mental! The issues we've had have been developing the gearbox by trying to get stronger gears and working on the suspension, the engine and the ignition system. Everything, really!" At times, it has been a massive reverse-engineering project to ensure period accuracy.

Aside from the bare shell and the engine block, just about everything else comes out of a small workshop in rural Yorkshire. Theaker's work, first revealed back in 2013, clearly caught the imagination. "We're building a 12th car at the moment," he says. »

…but Fiat had upper hand when it came to makes' crowns

The triple champion driving the 131 forward

Matt Edwards, 37, had just turned 20 when he had his first rally on his local Cambrian Rally in North Wales. Since then, across nearly two decades, he has become one of Britain's best national rally drivers.

As a rallying equivalent to British Touring Car stars like Colin Turkington or Ash Sutton, Edwards won the British Rally Championship three times in a row up to 2021 but could not sustain the gargantuan financial leap onto the world stage. Only Jimmy McRae, Roger Clark and Keith Cronin have more BRC crowns to their credit.

Throughout his career, Edwards has had to battle to raise the backing to carry on and some loyal supporters and key sponsors have kept him rallying. He therefore works tirelessly coaching other drivers to help fund his own competition.

However, as the 2022 season approached, plans to switch to the competitive Irish Tarmac series faltered. "There was a real prospect of me not doing any rallying this year," admits Edwards. "But it's always been on the cards to try and do a bit more with the Fiat and with me not having anything else, it was an ideal opportunity to carry on doing something and for Kevin and the team to make use of me being available."

While his BRC and ITRC plans were evaporating, Edwards was in regular contact with Kevin Theaker about the Fiat project. "We talked about it for a while," he says. "Even though we've had three years since I drove it last, there's been a lot going on that they've been trying to do for a long time."

Finally, he managed to put a one-off deal together to drive a Citroen C3 R5 on the Donegal International Rally in June and he was instantly on the pace, despite the unfamiliar surroundings. On the final day, he led the rally until a sudden puncture pitched the Citroen off the road and into a concrete pillar. Both Edwards and co-driver David Moynihan were injured, with Edwards sustaining several broken ribs and bruised lungs.

"There was a real prospect of me not doing any rallying this year"

He should, though, be fully fit when the BHRC season resumes in early September with the goal of adding a British Historic title to his three British crowns.

Edwards claimed a third BRC title last year

Edwards (r) has taken three wins in the Fiat this year

"There's one in Australia and a couple in Ireland now. It's just trying to make it like it was in the 1970s, Ford versus Fiat."

While the sale of complete cars was great news for the project, success in the fiercely competitive UK historic rallying arena proved harder to come by. Back in 2014, the talent of Julian Reynolds took the development car to third on the Roger Albert Clark Rally, albeit well off the leading Escort pace. Ahead of Reynolds were two drivers in Escorts who would go on to play important roles in the 131 story: Robinson and Elliott. In a supreme twist of irony, the rally was initially won by Edwards in another Escort, but his exclusion over route information elevated Reynolds to the podium.

Robinson was early to try the Fiat route and bagged some reasonable results. But, in truth, he never really got on with the car as it was then and reverted to his Escort. Then Elliott, once a rival to Richard Burns in the Peugeot Challenge, took a Fiat on alongside his Mk2.

Edwards has finally been able to demonstrate the 131's true potential on the stages

"You can make an Escort dance but you've got to be smooth in the Fiat"

When COVID-19 struck in the early spring of 2020, rallying went into shutdown and it was 18 months before cars returned to the forests with any degree of regularity. Up in Yorkshire, it proved to be a timely break for Theaker and his team as more time was available for the Fiat project rather than turning customer Escorts around between rallies.

Out of the pandemic, the 131 emerged stronger than ever for 2022 and, with triple BRC champion Edwards at the wheel, the car is truly taking the fight to the Escorts. That breakthrough first BHRC victory came on Rally North Wales in late March and was backed up by a 1-2 result in the historic section of the Rallynuts Stages two weeks later as Elliott chased Edwards home.

Though he missed the opening BHRC round in early February while trying to seal a deal for the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship, Edwards is now aiming to chase the BHRC title over the remaining three rounds after taking maximum scores on Rally North Wales and the Plains Rally. With the best five from six scores to count in the final reckoning, it is achievable but he can ill-afford a non-finish.

As well as untapping the car's pace, Edwards has also been working to make the 131 more user-friendly. "We're trying to make it easier to drive as well as faster," he explains. "The target market for the car is the historic championships and, if it is a bit of a wrestle for me to drive, that's not ideal. But that's definitely going the right way. We've made a lot of progress in a couple of tests and rallies, so that's been important."

Theaker – a typical Yorkshireman of relatively few words, who lets the results do the talking – adds: "It's taken a while but it's been good having Matt in the car because he's really good for feedback and set-up."

Elliott is well-placed to discuss the relative merits of the two cars and has been impressed by how the 131 has developed. "They have made amazing progress with the Fiat in the last couple of years and the engine is now equal to a good BDG," he reckons. "It's now a very good all-round package with better suspension and traction. But you've got to be a lot less flamboyant with the Fiat and it's not as nimble. You can make an Escort dance but you've got to be smooth in the Fiat. It is a close call!"

Edwards concludes: "We just need to run it as often as we can in the same format, rather than trying to tweak and improve – we need to get to a place that it's a finished article." If recent form is a guide, then the finished article looks like a match for the Escorts in historic rallying, just like the works cars were in the WRC more than 40 years ago.

Fiat was third on 2014 R.A.C. Rally, but some way behind the Escorts

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Maiden Carrera Cup season has been put on hold for Bartholomew

DAN BATHIE/PORSCHE

Bartholomew left seriously injured

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Porsche Carrera Cup GB driver Jack Bartholomew has been left with serious injuries following a training accident while cycling near Eastbourne last week.

The 23-year-old — who began his racing career in single-seaters in BRDC F4 before progressing to British GT, Lamborghini Super Trofeo and then finishing runner-up in the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB contest last year — was riding along the A259 when he was struck by a van on 18 July.

Bartholomew was stabilised at the scene before being transported to hospital by road ambulance. He suffered six broken ribs, a broken collarbone, punctured lung and lacerations to the right side of his body as a result of the impact. As Autosport closed for press on Tuesday, it was expected that Bartholomew would be released from hospital later this week to continue his recovery at home.

"I want to thank the emergency services that treated me at the roadside and all the staff at the Brighton Sussex County Hospital, they have been amazing," he said.

"My championship this year is pretty much over, which is a real shame as I was really starting to get to grips with the Porsche in Carrera Cup GB. I had limited testing before the season, so it took me a while to get to grips with the car in such a competitive field of drivers. I'm determined to get back in the car as soon as possible and will be doing everything to get back to full fitness as quickly as I can."

Bartholomew has a best result of third so far in his maiden Carrera Cup season with Richardson Racing, which came in the first Brands Hatch race in May. His place at the team for the next round at Knockhill this weekend will be taken by 2020 Ginetta GT5 Challenge champion Josh Malin, who drove for the squad last year.

Autosport sends its best wishes to Bartholomew for a speedy recovery.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Jaguar X-type finally to get race debut

CTCRC

The unraced Jaguar X-type SCV8, the last car to emerge from the Rouse Hall workshops of four-time British Touring Car champion Andy Rouse, should make its race debut next year — nearly two decades after its creation.

The spaceframe racer was built for Rouse's proposed SCV8 series, which attracted manufacturer backing from Jaguar and Peugeot but failed to get off the ground. It was made available for purchase last year by CNC Motorsport AWS — owner Alan Strachan worked for Rouse in period.

Supplied with a Lotus V8 used in SCV8's initial testing, the car was due to race with a 550bhp Nicholson McLaren V8. It will be Jaguar-powered by a 4.5-litre V8 for its belated debut, after Classic Touring Car Racing Club Jaguar Challenge pacesetter Tom Robinson paired up with brother Jack to buy it. Robinson's Swallows Racing concern is recommissioning the car, with the CTCRC's Classic Thunder series its most likely destination.

The Jaguar was due to race 20 years ago

"This car's been a bit of a poster car of mine from a kid," said Robinson. "We've got quite a special engine that was developed by Jaguar in 2003 for a Le Mans project that never happened.

"The end goal is to get a few of the drivers of that period in it. Imagine having Andy Rouse and John Cleland have a drive in it."

MARK PAULSON

Spa winner Fox Motorsport races under appeal

BRITISH GT

The result of last weekend's British GT race at Spa remains provisional as winners Nick Halstead and Jamie Stanley's Fox Motorsport McLaren raced under appeal following a qualifying overboosting issue.

The Fox entry and Paddock Motorsport's similar McLaren 720S GT3, which qualified second and fifth respectively, initially had their qualifying lap times removed as their turbo boost levels exceeded those allowed under the Balance of Performance.

The BoP boost allowance for all GT3 McLarens had been increased shortly before qualifying, while Autosport understands the BoP of all GT3 McLarens was checked after.

Both entries faced the prospect of starting from the back of the grid, but elected to race under appeal, meaning they could start in their original grid positions and that the race result is provisional until their case is heard in the UK's National Court at an undetermined future date.

"We don't control the boost on the car, McLaren do, and there's seven [McLaren] cars here, all seven cars have the same mapping," said Halstead.

"There's a discrepancy between what the McLaren data says and what the championship logger [says], so we've appealed it, but we just want to make it very clear that we cannot change it [the boost].

"McLaren have put a new map on all of the cars this [race day] morning. We know everyone was on that map and we now know everyone is on the new map to make sure it's definitely under. But it's not good enough that just two cars get penalised. It looks like we were cheating when we had no control over this. Boost is not down to us."

If the Fox victory is upheld, it will be the drivers' and team's first overall British GT win, although they were unable to take part in the podium ceremonies due to the International Sporting Code. Meanwhile, the Paddock McLaren finished seventh after two unrelated race penalties.

Paddock driver and team boss Martin Plowman added: "It's really frustrating because we have done everything within our power to comply with the rules. We want to stress that there was nothing untoward going on and the pace was genuine."

GRAHAM KEILLOH

Crews withdraw as sickness bug hits British GT paddock

BRITISH GT

Two entries were forced to withdrew from last weekend's British GT Spa race after the paddock was hit by a sickness bug that impacted several teams.

Team Abba's Mercedes-AMG GT3 entry, which was due to start in seventh, withdrew on race day morning as driver Sam Neary was unwell. The team said in a statement that the same bug was affecting several other members in the squad and across the paddock.

The Motus One McLaren 570S GT4 crew of James Wallis and Michael Broadhurst also withdrew, partly due to a sickness bug within the squad but also due to a turbo issue.

Others in the paddock reported feeling unwell on race day, including reigning British GT4 champion Will Burns. His Century Motorsport team requested permission from the organisers that Burns switch to drive the race's second stint rather than the first, but this request was turned down.

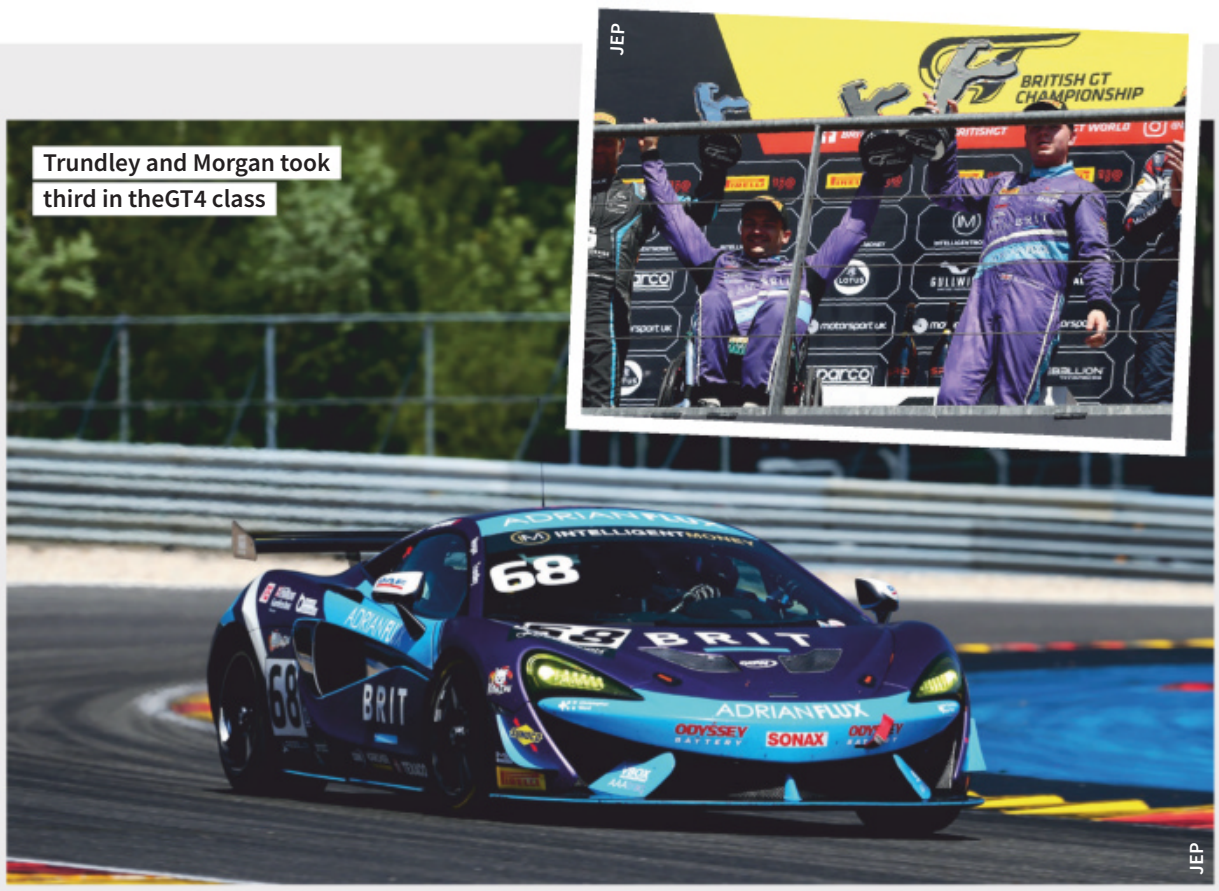
Century boss Nathan Freke said: "This morning he [Burns] was absolutely fine, he goes out for the morning warm-up, comes in and runs to the toilet and is violently sick, and the next few hours he couldn't stop being sick.

Burns battled through Spa event with sickness

"We tried to get the start-driver order changed to give Will a bit more time but they didn't allow us to do that, which I thought was pretty stupid.

"We had to put Will out first and he did a great job, came in and pretty much collapsed in the office of the truck."

GRAHAM KEILLOH



Trundley and Morgan took third in theGT4 class

Maiden outright GT4 podium for all-disabled Team BRIT duo

BRITISH GT

All-disabled squad Team BRIT took its first overall British GT podium finish last Sunday at Spa after finishing third in the GT4 race with its McLaren 570S.

The British GT debutant team aims to become the first all-disabled entry at the Le Mans 24 Hours in the future. Its McLaren in British GT is raced by Bobby Trundley, diagnosed with severe autism as a child, and Aaron Morgan, a paraplegic following a motocross accident.

Morgan ran competitively in the opening stint before Trundley held off and moved clear of three-time Le Mans 24 Hours class winner Darren Turner. Trundley then benefited from a Steller Audi penalty and, despite traction control problems, passed Tom Edgar's Toyota for third and finished only 2.3s off second.

"The mechanics did an incredible job in the pitstops, which meant we jumped the [Turner] Aston Martin, and then Bobby drove better than I've ever seen him drive and that's saying something," said Morgan.

"I don't think anyone ever expected [this] of us at Team BRIT but we're here showing there's no boundaries in motorsport."

Trundley added: "Aaron pulled out a fantastic stint. Defending against Darren Turner was something I never thought I'd do. The whole team has come to a completely different level this weekend."

GRAHAM KEILLOH

P68 BRITISH GT REPORT

Reeve set for Fiesta racing return

FIESTA

Former Renault UK Clio Cup competitor Nick Reeve is set to return to racing later this season after testing a British Racing and Sports Car Club Fiesta Championship car last week.

Reeve was runner-up in the Fiesta Junior Championship in 2017 before contesting a part-season of the Clio Cup the following year.

That ended with a heavy accident on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit after being tagged by a spinning car.

Reeve has since focused on work commitments with SMC Ford in Crayford, part of the Allen Motor Group, but tested a JRW Motorsport Ford Fiesta ST240 Turbo at Snetterton with a view to joining the championship for its final round at Brands in October.

"I've been wanting to get back out for ages," he said. "It [the test] went really well. A massive change from the 150s [used in Fiesta Junior] but I really loved it. The times I was able to set were only a few seconds off Clio times. When you think about how specialised the Clio is, it's quite impressive.

"Brands is a track I love and it's not too far away from home, especially if Allen Motor Group jump on board, which would be great — I've got quite a lot of support there."

MARK PAULSON

IN THE HEADLINES

PEARSON TO SIT OUT

British Formula 4 racer Joel Pearson has been forced out of the races at Knockhill this weekend through injury. The Chris Dittmann Racing driver crashed out of the last F4 race at Croft at Tower and sustained a broken left thumb. This has not yet healed sufficiently for Pearson to return to the cockpit in Scotland but he is targeting a comeback at Snetterton next month.

MORRIS MOVES ON

Seb Morris, the 2017 British GT champion, has called time on his Porsche Carrera Cup GB campaign. He managed a best result of just fifth across the opening half of the season and his Team Parker Racing outfit says he "has withdrawn from the championship aiming to return to endurance racing". His place at Knockhill this weekend will be taken by Dominique Bastien, who became the oldest driver to finish the Le Mans 24 Hours last year at the age of 75.

ASPIN GOES DUTCH

Porsche Carrera Cup GB Pro-Am frontrunner Will Aspin has added the Carrera Cup Benelux round at the Dutch Assen circuit next weekend to his schedule. The former Ginetta GT5 Challenge driver will use the event as extra experience of the 911 GT3 Cup car and will join Harry King in the Parker Revs line-up. "We wanted to find a way to improve qualifying and find some pace with the car," he said.

SPORTSCARS SET TO STAR

A vast array of GT1, GT2 and GT3 machinery is set to contest a pair of races at Spa as part of the SRO 30th GT Anniversary by Peter Auto event this weekend, ahead of the 24 Hours of Spa. A total of 28 cars will compete in the two 60-minute races, with the Chrysler Viper GTS-R, Maserati MC12 GT1 (below), Aston Martin DBR9, Lamborghini Murcielago R-SV and Ferrari F430 GTC among the models set to be in action.

STALEY

Full HGPCA field for revamped Gold Cup

Pre-1966 GP cars will take centre stage at Gold Cup event

MICK WALKER

HISTORICS

A very different mix of races curated by venue owner MotorSport Vision — centred on a capacity Historic Grand Prix Cars Association grid spanning 1952-65 — will feature at the revamped Oulton Park Gold Cup meeting this weekend.

Having switched dates with the Silverstone Classic, the new offering reflects the Gold Cup's heritage more accurately than in recent years. A Maserati 250F and Cooper-Bristols in the HGPCA field will transport spectators back to the Gold Cup's non-championship Formula 1 roots, when Stirling Moss won the first two in 1954-55 driving the Italian masterpieces.

Moss and world champions Jack Brabham, Jim Clark and John Surtees won Gold Cups in the HGPCA's era. Among the stars of the Saturday/Sunday double-header are Rudi Friedrichs's ex-Brabham Cooper T53, an ex-Clark Lotus 25 powered by a screaming Climax V8 — with multiple Monaco and Goodwood winner Andy Middlehurst up — and BRM P261s raced by Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart in period. Brabham BT4 and BT11 models represent the Tasman Cup and InterContinental Formula epoch.

Historic F2 tops the organising Historic Sports Car Club's contribution, its Niki Lauda Trophy named for the Austrian who won at Oulton in 1972 en route to the British title in a March. Robert Simac (March 712) is gunning for his seventh title from the Pre-'72 1600cc division. Matt Wrigley, Martin Wood (782s) and Mark Dwyer (742) head the two-litre entry.

Of the guest grids, the crowd-pleasing Classic Sports Car Club Tony Sugden Trophy Special Saloon and Modsports set is eagerly anticipated. The ex-Gerry Marshall Vauxhall Firenza 'Baby Bertha' and recent Brands Hatch winner Danny Morris's Ford Cosworth turbo-engined Peugeot 309 are among the wacky racers taking on local favourite Ric Wood's stunning Zakspeed Capri on its series debut.

The Historic Racing Drivers Club's Jack Sears Trophy brings a superb 1958-65 Touring Car miscellany on Saturday, from howling Jaguars to Lotus Cortinas. Mustangs and Falcons also play in Sunday's Alan Mann Trophy Masters Pre-'66 field, while two Vintage Sports-Car Club groups open the window on the past still further.

MARCUS PYE

Special 110-minute race as BARC turns 110

Brands Hatch race will be for closed-wheel production cars

GARY HAWKINS

BARC

The 110th anniversary of the formation of the forerunner to the British Automobile Racing Club will be celebrated with a 110-minute race at its season-ending Brands Hatch meeting in November.

The commemorative race is open to closed-wheel production cars and these will be split into different classes based on engine size. The 12-13 November contest is open to both two- and three-driver teams and competitors do not need to be BARC members.

"For more than a century, the club has been renowned for being the go-to place for national and international motor racing and we feel this is a nice way to tip our hat to reaching such a marvellous milestone," said sporting manager Mark Turner.

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SCOTT GAY/SANTA POD

Robinson dominates at Santa Pod as Camaro crushes rivals

DRAG RACING

For the first time, Santa Pod Raceway's giant Volkswagen festival, Bug Jam, hosted a round of the Motorsport UK British Drag Racing Championship – bellowing Pro Modified V8s offering a vivid contrast to the chainsaw buzz of a legion of VWs. Veteran Andy Robinson had spent this season's first two rounds running-in his new 1969 Chevrolet Camaro before snatching a win in round three. Here in round four, he delivered a demolition job.

Robinson 'ran the table': pole, low elapsed time and top speed of the event, all topped by a dominant victory. He clocked what proved to be the event's fastest speed, 246.35mph, straight off the trailer in Saturday's opening qualifying session.

A short field then allowed Robinson the luxury of an unopposed opening match, which proved fortunate. His crew spotted a hairline crack in the supercharger's burst panel and, having no opponent, Robinson was able to 'take the green', simply idling across the startline before shutting off without over-exerting the engine.

After Robinson defeated Annie Wallace, whose Mustang's engine faltered, the final pitted the seven-time title winner against defending champion, Kevin Slyfield. Slyfield's hopes of scoring a valedictory win in his farewell season vanished in a flash of red as he left just 0.027s too soon, triggering a disqualification, though he would have faced a tall order to match Robinson's 5.936s/244.22mph victory run.

ROBIN JACKSON

Ken Bowes 1965-2022

OBITUARY

The death of Ken Bowes, at 57, has saddened not only the fraternity he raced with, but also many enthusiasts he tutored and drivers he ran following his retirement from racing in the 1990s.

Bowes was a second-year subscriber to John Webb's Formula First in 1988 and, with Martin Short, gained notoriety for wearing fireproof undershorts over their racesuits! Bowes was sixth in the standings, before a shunt ended his campaign. Undeterred, the Formula Ford 2000 Winter Series provided a leg-up to slicks and wings.

Lacking neither confidence nor ambition, Bowes graduated to British F3's National class for older cars in 1989. Driving a Ralt-TOM'S Toyota RT32, he was out of money by mid-season, but did manage a division-winning 10th overall in a very wet Brands Hatch round.

Bowes made a comeback in FF1600 in 1992 and took fourth in the Festival's final before later becoming a popular instructor with the Silverstone Racing School he ran. He subsequently worked in Singapore.

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

HEATHCOTE BACK TO BRX

Former British Rallycross champion Nathan Heathcote will return to the category at Pembrey next month. Heathcote claimed the 2017 title and has since predominantly focused on circuit racing. But a demonstration run in a Ford RS200 at the Nitro Rallycross event at Lydden Hill reignited his interest and he will now return in a Citroen C4 he raced for part of his title-winning season. "Driving the RS200 reminded me how much I miss rallycross," he said.

BRSCC TROPHIES AWARDED

The British Racing and Sports Car Club East Anglian Centre awarded two of its perpetual trophies at Snetterton last weekend. Jordan Dempsey claimed the Henry Rilett Trophy, named after the former chief scrutineer and traditionally held for local Formula Ford and single-seater races. The Barn Ruche Trophy for saloon cars, with previous winners including Peter Baldwin, Graham 'Skid' Scarborough and Will Hoy, was won by Sunday morning Modified Fords winner Dave Cockell.

GINETTA CLARIFICATION

Autosport wishes to clarify details of a story about a replica being created of a notable Ginetta G4. In the story (Autosport, 23 June), it was stated that Graham Hill raced the original G4 in 1964 but this is not believed to be the case. Instead, the Formula 1 champion test drove the car for a magazine feature.

GOODWOOD'S DEMOS

More details have been revealed about the demonstrations at the Goodwood Revival. One of the main demos will celebrate 75 years since Enzo Ferrari founded his legendary manufacturer, with 75 historic Ferraris set to attend. Sixty years since Graham Hill's first Formula 1 title win will also be commemorated at the 16-18 September event – with Damon Hill due to drive his father's BRM P578 (below) – along with 100 years of the Austin 7.

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Plenty to play for

The BTCC's supporting series all resume at Knockhill this weekend and many of the battles are interestingly poised ahead of the final five events

STEPHEN LICKORISH

While British GT is heading into its summer break with yet another race result that is only provisional (see page 62), the British Touring Car Championship and its support categories are emerging from their summer hiatus at Knockhill this weekend. And there are plenty of interesting storylines and title battles to follow over the second half of the season.

The 2022 campaign has certainly been a year of change among the TOCA supports. Three of the five regular categories have introduced new cars this year (British Formula 4 also featuring a new organiser as part of wholesale changes), but the other two have also boasted rule tweaks that have helped shake up the competitive order.

The closest of the title fights heading to Scotland is in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB, where just five points separate the top four drivers. Kiern Jewiss (Team Parker Racing) and Will Martin (Richardson Racing) were both race winners last year in an ultra-competitive field that was headed by champions Dan Cammish and Harry King along with Lorcan Hanafin, and now narrowly lead the way. But the Redline pair of new Porsche GB Junior Adam Smalley and the returning Matty Graham have also quickly got to grips with the Type 992 911 GT3 Cup car and are firmly in the mix. Add in impressive pace at times from newcomers Theo Edgerton and Gus Burton and there is plenty of intrigue in the top Pro class alone. Calling a winner is tricky, although Jewiss and Martin will be tough to beat.

> **"The closest of the title fights heading to Scotland is in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB"**

Things are not quite so close in the other two championships with new machinery. While Alex Dunne in British Formula 4 and James Kellett in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup may appear shoo-ins for title honours, their rivals certainly should not give up hope just yet. Irishman Dunne has taken F4's new era by storm, winning seven of the first 15 races. To put the Hitech racer's domination into context, no other driver has won more than twice. Not bad for someone who had not even been confirmed as being on the grid at the time Autosport wrote its season preview.

The more powerful, halo-shod Tatuus-Abarth car introduced for this year seems perfectly to Dunne's liking and he has therefore built a 51-point advantage. That may seem insurmountable, but recent history suggests otherwise. In both 2019 and 2020, larger mid-season deficits were negated. Sebastian Alvarez reduced Zane Maloney's 77-point gap to nothing by the Brands Hatch finale, while Zak O'Sullivan similarly shaved Luke Browning's 57-point lead to zero two years ago. And, for all of Dunne's dominance, he has looked beatable. Take, for example, the clumsy errors in the third race at Brands Hatch or spinning in the middle Oulton Park contest. As others get into their stride, rivals including Carlin duo Oliver Gray and Ugo Ugochukwu could become ever greater threats.

But, for the ultimate lesson in domination, you have to look at James Kellett in the GT4 Supercup. He has been unstoppable in the new G56, winning every race so far. The Century pilot is far from assured of the crown, though — despite chief rival Josh Rattican suffering a puncture in the Brands Hatch opener and being punted out of the most recent race at Oulton Park. With the start of the season being pushed back to cater for the G56's introduction, only a quarter of the scheduled 2022 races have been completed. So there is plenty of time for others to halt Kellett's march and turn their seasons around.

Also looking good at the top of the standings is early Mini Challenge pacesetter Sam Weller. The Hybrid Tune driver has had a remarkably consistent start to the season to take a 43-point lead and puts some of that down to the team's focus on the new compound of Goodyear tyre introduced for this year that others, such as regular 2021 winner Jack Davidson, have yet to truly master. Weller's closest rival is JW Bird driver Jack Mitchell, another who was a late addition for this year. But, despite currently being well adrift, perennial frontrunners Dan Zelos and Max Coates cannot be completely discounted just yet, not least because there's a colossal 56 points available in each race.

And that just leaves Ginetta Junior. Perhaps unsurprisingly, that is one of the toughest tussles to predict. Reigning Winter Series champion Josh Rowledge (R Racing) and fellow second-year driver Harri Reynolds (Assetto Motorsport) have gone toe-to-toe so far this year, while impressive rookie Will Macintyre (Elite Motorsport) is growing ever stronger and is firmly in the mix, 14 points separating the trio. What is surprising is that last year's runner-up Liam McNeilly is not also part of that picture. But the Fox Motorsport driver's year got off to a bad start having struggled with the new qualifying format that gives just three laps for competitors to set their two quick times. This means there is no margin for error as category chiefs attempt to eliminate the potentially dangerous towing operated by the larger teams.

Ultimately, as has so often been demonstrated in recent years, anything can happen when the title is on the line in these categories. And you can be sure of plenty more twists and turns before the Brands Hatch finale on 8-9 October.

Fox takes first British GT overall win – but result is provisional

SPA (BEL)
BRITISH GT
23-24 JULY

That British GT's visit to Spa ended with an empty top step of the podium for its overall victors — with the second and third-place finishers celebrating sheepishly either side — was an indication that this was no ordinary race.

On one level, it was quite the good news story. Nick Halstead and Jamie Stanley took their and the Fox Motorsport team's first overall British GT race victory, and they did it with a formidable performance in their McLaren 720S that did not owe to the misfortune of others.

But, even before the race, things were not as they seemed, and it all went back to before qualifying when the GT3 McLarens got a Balance of Performance benefit — less weight and more boost. The Fox and Paddock Motorsport teams thus took second and fifth on the grid respectively, but it transpired that both of their McLarens were overboosting more than the BoP allowed, and so their lap times were scrubbed and they faced starting at the back of the grid.

The two crews chose instead to race under appeal, though, arguing the matter was outside their control (rather it was in McLaren's, they said) and there was nothing untoward going on.

This meant they could start from their earned qualifying positions as well as, more regrettably, the result of the race being provisional until the matter is heard at the UK's National Court at an undetermined date. Sadly, it's not the first time this season that a British GT race result has been left unclear leaving the venue.

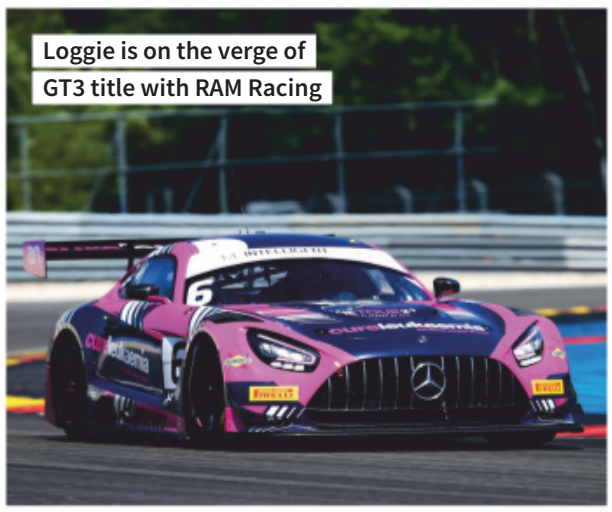
Parking the off-track kerfuffle aside, the two-hour race proved to be a good one, particularly in its first half when the Am drivers provided a tight multi-car battle at the front of the field.

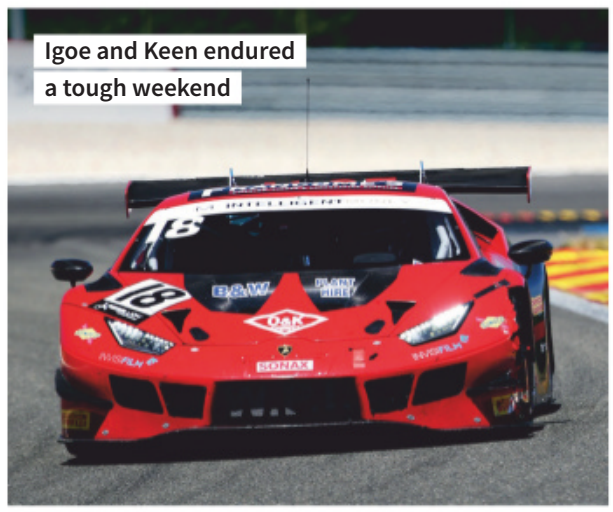
Poleman Adam Balon led in his Barwell Lamborghini Huracan Evo, with James Cottingham's 2 Seas Mercedes-AMG on his tail, along with three McLarens in the fight: Halstead, Graham Davidson's Paddock machine and Morgan Tillbrook's Enduro version. Redline's Alex Malykhin was also in the mix at the wheel of a Porsche 911 GT3-R, rather than his usual Lamborghini, to help his 24 Hours of Spa preparations.

Halstead and Stanley (40) won on the road, but will have to wait to find out result

The McLarens looked the most potent, but two dropped out of contention when Davidson tapped Tillbrook into the final chicane. The Enduro driver was severely delayed by the spin and recovery, while Davidson — shortly after he'd climbed into first place — got a stop/go penalty for the collision. Later both cars were further impeded, the Paddock machine by a track-limits penalty and Enduro by a puncture.

Balon struggled to regain tyre temperature after a safety car period — brought about when Mia Flewitt's 7TSIX McLaren was helped off at Eau Rouge by Michael Igoe's WPI Lamborghini. Balon therefore dropped back, leaving Cottingham in front from Halstead's Fox McLaren.


Loggie is on the verge of GT3 title with RAM Racing


Igoe and Keen endured a tough weekend

DAY AND MILLER BLOW TITLE FIGHT OPEN

If a metaphorical cloud hung over the GT3 race at Spa, the GT4 battle featured no such concern as the youthful R Racing Aston Martin Vantage pair of Josh Miller and Jamie Day claimed their second win in three races.

And the result sends them right into the thick of a hectic championship fight, placing them second between long-time chief title protagonists Matt Topham/Darren Turner (Newbridge Aston) and Richard Williams/Sennan Fielding (Steller Audi R8), with just two points covering the trio.

The Miller/Day Aston qualified third, confident of the car's race pace even though they thought the track with its straights wouldn't suit the Aston. The polestitting Marco Signoretti/Matt Cowley Academy Ford Mustang was not a race day factor due to excessive tyre wear, as Jordan Collard in the Toyota Gazoo GR Supra sensationally rose from sixth to lead within a couple of laps.

Collard stayed ahead for the rest of the stint, despite tyre pickup causing a vibration and requiring him to avoid kerbs, all while Miller gave close chase.

Tom Edgar took over the Toyota from Collard but, after a time, struggled with tyre wear. Day – having taken over from Miller – therefore closed onto the Toyota's tail and passed with a fine outside-to-inside move at Stavelot. The Aston stayed ahead until the end, winning by 11s.

Day said: "They [Edgar] had a bit of a gap, I made a bit of a mistake with the exit from the pits. We chased him down, it took a while. It was a really nice battle with Tom.

"As a team, we're just learning more each weekend, being new to British GT, not only myself and Josh but as a team. Hopefully we're going to make [winning] a habit."

For much of the way, though, the smart money looked on Steller to win. The Audi effort had rediscovered its form with a new car for this

Managing his tyres carefully, Halstead came on strong towards the end of the stint and, not long before the pitstops, got better drive than Cottingham out of La Source and swept past, via some contact, on the run down to Eau Rouge and quickly built a lead.

All came in at half distance to hand over to their Pro team-mates, which left Stanley in the Fox McLaren with a lead of about six seconds over Cottingham's 2 Seas partner Lewis Williamson. The ever-rapid Jules Gounon, helped by Barwell and Redline success penalties, meanwhile had leapt to third in his RAM Racing Mercedes shared with points leader Ian Loggie.

But any thoughts of either Williamson or Gounon being able to haul in Stanley proved false as the trio largely matched each other for the rest of the race, with just over 5s the winning margin at the flag.

The victors, despite the off-track background noise, were defiant. "We had pace," Stanley said. "We did what we should have done, the appeal s*** will get sorted out in the background. Morally, we won Spa, so I don't care what they say."

Halstead added: "Once I got into my pace about halfway through [my stint], I definitely had the speed against everyone else and just slowly worked my way through them. The car felt mega, it proved that we can do it. We'll wait for the appeal, but [the race was an] amazing experience."

The RAM Mercedes' third place meant Loggie extended his points lead even further with two rounds remaining, helped by the Igoe/Phil Keen WPI Lamborghini – second in the standings heading into Spa – enduring a frustrating time.

The team struggled for a set-up while Igoe was suffering with tonsillitis. Keen eventually, and atypically, crashed out at Eau Rouge, the cause of which was something of a mystery. It means Loggie could claim the title at Brands Hatch in September.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

RACE RESULTS

GT3

(47 laps) 1 Nick Halstead/Jamie Stanley (McLaren 720S); 2 James Cottingham/Lewis Williamson (Mercedes-AMG) +5.236s; 3 Ian Loggie/Jules Gounon (Mercedes); 4 Adam Balon/Sandy Mitchell (Lamborghini Huracan); 5 Alex Malykhin/James Dorlin (Porsche 911); 6 John Ferguson/Ulysse De Pauw (Mercedes). **Fastest lap** Gounon 2m19.836s (112.04mph). **Pole** Balon/Mitchell. **Starters** 15.

GT4

(44 laps) 1 Josh Miller/Jamie Day (Aston Martin Vantage); 2 Jamie Orton/Seb Hopkins (Porsche 718 Cayman) +10.713s; 3 Aaron Morgan/Bobby Trundley (McLaren 570S); 4 Richard Williams/Sennan Fielding (Audi R8 LMS); 5 Jordan Collard/Tom Edgar (Toyota GR Supra); 6 Matt Topham/Darren Turner (Aston Martin). **FL** Benji Hetherington (Porsche) 2m33.776s (101.88mph). **P** Marco Signoretti/Matt Cowley (Ford Mustang). **S** 13.
Points 1 Topham/Turner 116.5; 2 Miller/Day 115.5 (below); 3 Williams/Fielding 114.5; 4 Signoretti/Cowley 96.5; 5 Jack Brown/Will Burns 95; 6 Edgar 77.5.

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

weekend, having found a crack in the previous one. Fielding passed Day in the second stint, then looked set to take the lead from Edgar, but by now he had a stop/go penalty after a mechanic neglected to pull their goggles down at the pitstop.

The points-leading Topham/Turner duo struggled with brake problems as a practice off set them back, and the car's relative straightline speed shortage made race progress difficult. Turner brought the car home sixth, only just short of the toiling Edgar as the pair finished side-by-side in a thrilling crescendo, both having been passed by the recovering Fielding on the final lap.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

Aston duo took second win in three races

Browning bags the double at Spa to extend points lead

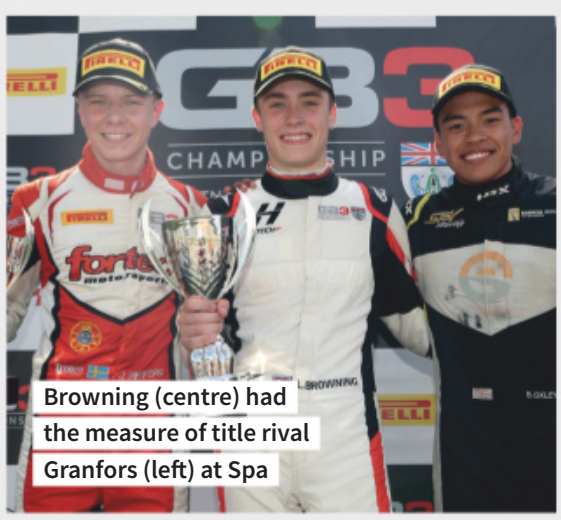
SPA (BEL)
GB3
23-24 JULY

Hitech GP's Luke Browning was almost unbeatable at Spa-Francorchamps as the second half of the GB3 Championship season commenced in the Ardennes.

The British driver took pole for both of Saturday's races with lap times almost half a second faster than his closest rivals, before going on to dominate each encounter.

Browning made a good start in the first race but was passed on the long run to Les Combes on the opening lap, with championship rival Joel Granfors taking full advantage of the tow to blast past.

Behind, a multi-car first lap incident exiting La Source eliminated James Hedley (racing for JHR having switched from Elite) and Nico Christodoulou (Arden), which brought out the safety car. When that pitted, Browning mirrored Granfors's lap-one move to reclaim the lead and romped into the distance to win by over six seconds.



JEP/MOTORSPORTIMGAES

Browning (centre) had the measure of title rival Granfors (left) at Spa

Fortec Motorsports driver Granfors settled for second ahead of Chris Dittmann Racing's Branden Oxley, who benefited when a 5s track-limits penalty was given to Hitech's Cian Shields after he had taken third on the road. Max Esterson (Douglas Motorsport) finished in Oxley's wheeltracks to claim fourth, ahead of Carlin's Javier Sagrera and Elite's Tom Lebbon.

Browning's race-two start wasn't as strong as his first and that allowed Oxley, who started second, to take the lead. Along the Kemmel Straight, Browning and Granfors made it a three-way battle, with Granfors edging the Hitech driver onto the grass before challenging Oxley at Les Combes.

Granfors was later judged to have forced Oxley off the road after the latter skipped across the kerbs on the inside of the corner and clattered into the back of the Swede. Oxley was eliminated with front suspension damage, while Granfors somehow emerged unscathed and in the lead from Browning.

Next time around, Browning got into Granfors's tow and made the move stick into Les Combes. While Granfors was close to replicating the same move on lap three, Browning was able to stretch his lead by a couple of tenths per lap to make it two wins from two.

Granfors finished 1.5s behind but, having been adjudged to be the guilty party in the Oxley incident, was given a 10s penalty that dropped him to fourth, and elevated Esterson to second and Oxley's CDR team-mate McKenzy Cresswell to third for his maiden GB3 podium.

The fully reversed-grid race on Sunday morning proved to be almost a non-event as a colossal accident for Arden's David Morales at Blanchimont brought out the red flags after less than three laps were completed. The American was able to extract himself from the car and was released from hospital after checks.

A restart took place with Carlin's Callum Voisin initially declared the winner having taken the lead just as a safety car was deployed, which effectively ended the race. But officials deemed the restarted grid order to have been incorrect, so the result was instead taken from the first lap of the original race, with Tommy Smith (Douglas) named the winner ahead of Voisin and Fortec's Zak Taylor.

Browning was classified 18th and leaves Spa with an increased margin of 30.5 points to Granfors at the top of the standings, with the next round taking place at Silverstone this weekend.

RICHARD RANDLE

RACE RESULTS

GB3
Race 1 (8 laps) 1 Luke Browning; 2 Joel Granfors +6.095s; 3 Branden Oxley; 4 Max Esterson; 5 Javier Sagrera; 6 Tom Lebbon. **Fastest lap** Browning 2m16.329s (114.92mph). **Pole** Browning. **Starters** 22.
Race 2 (9 laps) 1 Browning; 2 Esterson +10.105s; 3 McKenzy Cresswell; 4 Granfors; 5 John Bennett; 6 Marcos Flack. **FL** Browning 2m16.176s (115.05mph). **P** Browning. **S** 22.
Race 3 (1 lap) 1 Tommy Smith; 2 Callum Voisin +0.235s; 3 Zak Taylor; 4 Roberto Faria; 5 Nick Gilkes; 6 Alex Connor. **P** Taylor. **S** 22.
Points 1 Browning 311; 2 Granfors 280.5; 3 Esterson 232.5; 4 Voisin 206; 5 Faria 203.5; 6 Lebbon 184.5.

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Pickup Trucks star on return to Lydden Hill

LYDDEN HILL
LHMC
23 JULY

Tompkins took victory in the opening Pickup race
GARY HAWKINS

Victory honours in the Pickup Truck Racing Championship double-header were shared between Paul Tompkins and George Turiccki, as the series returned to Lydden Hill for the first time since 2013.

Having battled his way up to second during an exciting race one, Tompkins then relieved polesitter Allen Cooper of the lead at Pilgrims, leaving Cooper to battle for second with Mark Willis before a shunt involving Danny Hunn at Chesson's Drift brought out a red flag.

After tyre barrier repair work was completed, a five-lap sprint determined the outcome of the contest. Tompkins led away at the restart, while Willis quickly relegated Cooper to third at Paddock. The trio finished in that order come the flag as Tompkins's son, Dean, narrowly held off Turiccki to claim fourth.

Reigning champion and current series leader Turiccki ran out an unchallenged victor in the second event after powering around the outside of poleman Michael Smith on the first lap.

There was very little to separate Willis and Tompkins Sr behind in the 20-lap race, as the former swarmed all over the back of his rival in his attempt to force an opening. Despite the constant pressure, Tompkins stood firm until the penultimate tour when he ran wide at Devil's Elbow and lost momentum, with Willis seizing the opportunity to grab second.

Martin Reynolds took advantage of mechanical gremlins striking the Maguire Mini Traveller of early leader Bill Richards to win the opening Classic and Modern Motorsport Club Super Saloon race aboard his Ford Escort. Mark Cripps took second in his BMW E46 M3 while Steve Dann was a distant third in his VW Scirocco having worked his way ahead of the overheating VW Golf GTI of Tommy Knight.

Race two was stopped early so Marcus Bicknell's stranded Ford Taurus ASCAR could be recovered from the infield at Chesson's Drift after a spin. Reynolds controlled the restarted race to record a double, while Dann was able to claim second after Cripps spun wildly onto the infield along Dover Slope on lap 10 of 19.

Neal Gardiner was another dominant double victor in the pair of CMMC Tin Tops races aboard his Honda Civic, although his cause was aided when fastest qualifier Chris Whiteman had to withdraw his Type R version before the first race. Ken Angell took second in the opening encounter in his BMW E36 328i Coupe.

Graham Richardson, a first race non-finisher in his Civic, stormed through from the back of the grid to claim second in race two after Angell spun into the gravel on the outside of Devil's Elbow defending the spot.

Just eight cars lined up for the first Intermarque Silhouette race as Daniel Smith steered his Mercedes SLK to a crushing win in the opener having got ahead of polesitter Mick Robertson (VW Corrado) early on.

Second place was eventually taken by Colin Smith in his Ginetta following a tight battle with Paul Knight. Daniel Smith cantered to victory again in race two while Knight, competing in a Vauxhall Tigra once driven by ex-British Touring Car racer Matt Simpson, came home second.

The European Late Model Series appeared at Lydden with ASCAR machinery and Euro V8s competing anti-clockwise on the oval layout. Dutchman Wim Moonen, who spun his Late Model V8 in unison with leader Peter Medley (Eurocar V8) in the first encounter, took a win in the final after powering clear from the rest of the field in the early stages. Keith Whalley was first across the line in race one in his ASCAR V8.

MARK LIBBETER

ASCAR and V8 machines took to the oval layout at Lydden Hill
GARY HAWKINS

WEEKEND WINNERS

PICKUPS
Race 1 Paul Tompkins
Race 2 George Turiccki

CMMC SUPER SALOONS
Races 1 & 2 Martin Reynolds (Ford Escort)

CMMC TIN TOPS
Races 1 & 2 Neal Gardiner (Honda Civic)

INTERMARQUE SILHOUETTES
Races 1 & 2 Daniel Smith (Mercedes SLK)

EUROPEAN LATE MODEL SERIES
Race 1 Keith Whalley (V8 ASCAR)
Race 2 Wim Moonen (Late Model V8)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Dempsey *just* fails to join Ford treble winners

SNETTERTON
BRSCC
23-24 JULY

Jordan Dempsey moved clear at the top of the National Formula Ford standings with a near perfect weekend at Snetterton. Pole position and three fastest laps demonstrated the Kevin Mills Racing driver's pace in his Spectrum, and only Lucas Romanek's last-gasp pass in the finale denied Dempsey a hat-trick of wins.

Dempsey dominated the opener, winning by nine seconds. No tow left Romanek's Oldfield Motorsport Van Diemen qualifying a lowly seventh but he climbed to second, securing the place by passing Jamie Sharp and Morgan Quinn in one move at Riches.

Romanek shadowed Dempsey throughout race two but couldn't find a way past. The pair then entertained as they rose from sixth and seventh in the reversed-grid finale. Romanek demoted Sharp from the lead mid-race, while Dempsey took second at Wilson three laps from home before charging into the lead via a better exit from Murrays. After under-the-weather Sharp spun away the chance of a third podium, challenging Romanek at Riches, it became a two-way fight. Struggling for grip, Dempsey ran wide at Murrays and Romanek outdragged him to the line by just 0.028s.

"I was not expecting the victory about three-quarters of the way round the lap," admitted Romanek. "I just managed to pressure him into a mistake."

"To lose by a wheel is painful," Dempsey rued, before reflecting: "It could be the weekend that works wonders for the championship."

Previous points leader Colin Queen endured a difficult meeting despite qualifying second. He suffered two rear punctures in the first race, climbed only to ninth in race two after losing touch with the lead pack, and retired his Ray from the finale after first-lap contact.

Unlike Dempsey, Thomas Lee did successfully claim a hat-trick, in Fiesta Junior. Beaten away by Race Car Consultants team-mate Albert Webster in each bout, Lee edged a fine battle that had both drivers grinning after the opener. The pair exchanged the lead in race two before Lee pulled away. Webster was forced to fend off Archie Handy, who scored a maiden podium after George Foxlow had done likewise in the opener.

Battling again in race three, Lee dived inside Webster and nudged him wide at Wilson on the final lap, letting Sid Smith challenge. When Webster ran wide at Oggies, Smith snatched second. Three-time 2022 winner Smith managed no better than fifth in the first two races, having been sent to the back of the grid with a 10s penalty after an out-of-date fire extinguisher failed scrutineering.

Gearbox problems sidelining James Allen's turbocharged Ford Focus gave Dave Cockell a clear run to claim a hat-trick of Modified Fords wins in his Escort Cosworth. Simon Light's V8-engined Capri almost kept Cockell in sight each time but he pulled up in race three when exhaust fumes started entering the cockpit. Paul Nevill's Duratec-motivated Escort Mk2 inherited second but only after Jack Gadd's climb from the back was thwarted by recurrent electrical gremlins in his Mk1 Escort RSR. Dave Matthias took his family-built Sierra RS500 to a maiden podium on Sunday morning.

Fiesta points leader Jenson Brickley looked unbeatable in qualifying and the first race — after recovering from a trademark tardy getaway — but a set-up change was his undoing. Trying to dial out understeer, Brickley was left with an "undriveable" car and took third in race two. Alastair Kellett won under pressure from Zach Lucas.

After four consecutive second places, GCI Racing's Ian Wood and Craig Butterworth scored a maiden Fun Cup win, seeing off challenges from Team Viking and MJ Tec. Reigning champion UVio Hofmann's Lotus was heading for a comfortable victory, only for Fabio Randaccio to bring in the car he shared with Scott Fitzgerald with a broken left-front wheel hub. Four laps were lost, leaving them 13th.

Richard Bliss and Andrew Dyer split two closely fought CityCar Cup contests. The third was abandoned after Paul Savage's heavy impact exiting Williams damaged the barriers. Savage had already rolled onto his roof after clipping the Nelson sausage kerb in the opener.

Clubsport Trophy polesitter Jasver Sapra overcame throttle-linkage issues that shortened his qualifying and forced a pitlane start to win in his invitational-class slick-shod BMW M3. Phiroze Bilimoria (VW Scirocco) shook off Paul Hinson (BMW Compact) for official Clubsport honours.

MARK PAULSON

Lee (l) and Webster were closely matched in Fiesta Junior contests

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD STYLES

Dempsey narrowly lost out to Romanek (r) in finale, but still takes strong FF1600 points lead

WEEKEND WINNERS

NATIONAL FORMULA FORD
Races 1 & 2 Jordan Dempsey (Spectrum 011C)
Race 3 Lucas Romanek (Van Diemen JL13)

FIESTA JUNIOR
Races 1, 2 & 3 Thomas Lee (ST150)

MODIFIED FORDS
Races 1, 2 & 3 Dave Cockell (Escort Cosworth)

FIESTA CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Jenson Brickley (ST240 Turbo)
Race 2 Alastair Kellett (ST240 Turbo)

FUN CUP
GCI Racing (Ian Wood/Craig Butterworth, below)

CITYCAR CUP
Race 1 Richard Bliss (Toyota Aygo)
Race 2 Andrew Dyer (Citroen C1)

CLUBSPORT TROPHY
Jasver Sapra (BMW M3)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

THE ZAKSPEED TRIBUTE ESCORT TURNING HEADS IN MODIFIED FORDS

"It's old-school motorsport where you could win half the battle in the workshop before you even turn up just by using initiative and innovative ideas," said Modified Fords racer Neil Jessop.

The Eastbourne-based engineer runs his self-built Zakspeed Group 5-style Escort Mk2 in the series' Class B, for cars with medium-sized normally aspirated engines. He took a fourth class win this season on Saturday before being sidelined by starter motor and fuel pump problems.

"I like to think of it as a tribute," said Jessop. "It's not a replica because it's modern spec. But the Gp5 Zakspeed cars were the ultimate Escorts in my mind so I wanted to do something that looked like that but had the pace to keep up with the quick boys now."

Jessop, who cut his racing teeth on short ovals, acquired a bare shell and spent the next couple of years transforming it into what was initially a less outlandish Group 2-style car.

"Because I wanted the car to sit low, the gearbox tunnel, transmission tunnel and diff tunnel are all raised up," explained Jessop, who also fabricated the period-style six-link rear suspension with a Watt's linkage. Custom Penske dampers may have an edge on 1970s' technology, but a Julian Godfrey-built two-litre Duratec engine developing around 280bhp offers a more affordable and reliable route to a representative level of power.

The UK's 2020 lockdown provided Jessop with the opportunity to add Gp5 wide wheel arches, coupled with a 52-inch Spedeworth Hot Rod rear axle, giving the car a track of 1850mm.

"Putting it into this guise, I've gained a lot of track width which obviously makes it handle a lot better," said Jessop, admitting "it's probably the widest car on the grid".

Jessop believes Zakspeed cars were the "ultimate Escorts"

Outgunned by the turbocharged cars in Class A and the Smith & Jones and Millington-engined Class B+ machinery, Jessop's lightweight special, at around 725kg, can compete on more technical circuits. He qualified third and finished second overall at Brands Hatch in April.

"It's such a fun car to drive," he said. "The weight was a massive thing, right from when I had the bare shell. Tiny brackets I wasn't going to use came off."

Rather than spending a fortune chasing more horsepower, or upgrading the five-speed H-pattern gearbox to a sequential version – likely adding weight – Jessop is focusing on suspension geometry, with assistance from Norway-based Jonathan Edwards of JEMS Race Engineering.

"He's helping me remotely from my feedback and videos," Jessop explained. "With any race car, the better it feels to me, the faster I can go, the harder I can push.

"You break down a corner into several sections and you try and make the car good in each of those sections – entry, midpoint and exit – because they're all different in the attitude of the car.

"That's the fun bit, I think. You do something in the workshop, make a change and then you come here [and prove it on track]."

MARK PAULSON

MX-5 Mk3 wins shared as title rivals struggle

OULTON PARK
BRSCC
23 JULY

Knibbs (l) and Cossins had close fight in opener

Michael Knibbs and Will Blackwell-Chambers shared the spoils in the Mazda MX-5 Supercup at Oulton Park, on a day when leading championship contenders Richard Amos and Patrick Fletcher both ran into trouble.

Amos arrived in Cheshire leading the standings, but the four-time winner hasn't been victorious since April and his barren spell continued with two retirements. In both races his demise came after his Paddock Motorsport Mk3 MX-5 arrived at Hislops too fast mid-race, overshooting into the escape road.

He had briefly led the opening bout, but James Cossins drove around the outside of him at Old Hall on lap two of 15. For a while, Cossins had stretched his legs but the extended half-hour race distance provided ample time for others to get on terms. Initially, it appeared that Masters points leader Nic Grindrod might present the biggest threat, as he charged up to third from ninth on the grid, but his performance plateaued, leaving Knibbs as the main rival to Cossins.

That threat crystallised at the beginning of lap nine when Knibbs grabbed the advantage at Old Hall, but Cossins remained resilient and was ahead again by the end of lap 12. Knibbs swept back through at Cascades on the penultimate lap and victory — comfortably his best result of the season — was sealed when Cossins was delayed in an incident on the final lap, eventually finishing seventh.

Blackwell-Chambers emerged in second place, withstanding tremendous pressure from Fletcher, who came on strong after a muted start to the race. Grindrod was fourth, ahead of (the unrelated) Brayden Fletcher and Colin Bysouth, who both incurred track-limits penalties.

That was to be the high point of the day for multiple Clio 182 champion Patrick Fletcher, who was eliminated from race two in what was ruled to be a racing incident at Old Hall. Before that, Fletcher had spent several laps applying pressure to Blackwell-Chambers — who had led from pole — before finally executing a beautiful move around the outside into Hislops on lap nine of 13.

The flashpoint came a lap-and-a-half later, when Fletcher struck the kerb and then the car of Knibbs, who was up to second at that point. As Blackwell-Chambers tried to take avoiding action, he touched Fletcher's car — which went off onto the grass and briefly into the barriers.

Blackwell-Chambers survived, emerging in front and just holding off Bysouth on the run to the line, while Knibbs retrieved third from Cossins at Cascades on the final lap.

The Moose Trophy — run in memory of Colin Benn — was revived for a pair of non-championship Super Classic FF1600 encounters. A wet qualifying session had the potential to spice things up, with Historic and Classic era cars to the fore, headed by Simon Hadfield's Lotus 51.

He remained at the front of the race for only half a lap, however, with Jordan Harrison's Lola T540E taking over, before he in turn was usurped by Callum Grant's Merlyn Mk20A by the end of lap two.

Grant battles with Harrison for Moose Trophy FF1600 glory

WEEKEND WINNERS

OULTON PARK

MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP
Race 1 Michael Knibbs
Race 2 Will Blackwell-Chambers

MOOSE TROPHY SUPER CLASSIC FF1600
Races 1 & 2 Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk20A)

BMW COMPACT CUP
Races 1 & 2 Mikey Doble

MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Fraser Fenwick
Race 2 Steve Foden

MAZDA MX-5 CLUBMAN
Race 1 Neil Chisnall
Race 2 Declan McDonnell

ANGLESEY

FERRARI FORMULA CLASSIC
Race 1 Wayne Marrs (F355 Challenge)
Races 2, 3 & 4 Tristan Simpson (F355 Challenge)

NORTHERN SALOON & SPORTS CAR CHAMPIONSHIP
Races 1 & 2 Jon Woolfitt (Spire GTR)

ALFA ROMEO CHAMPIONSHIP
Races 1 & 2 George Osborne (75)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

A grassy moment for the Royale RP29 of Rick Morris at Hislops meant that he lost out to Chris Hodgen's more modern Van Diemen in the battle for third.

Having secured race one, Grant led the way at the beginning of a wet second contest. After a caution period — during which it had stopped raining — Harrison briefly took the lead, but ultimately he finished a long way back, and behind Morris after losing out on the penultimate lap. Hodgen, having been involved in a first-lap skirmish, recovered to 12th.

Mikey Doble strengthened his position in the BMW Compact Cup with two victories, the first a clear one over Lee Dendy-Sadler, and the second a more marginal one over Ian Howes, who seemed more comfortable in the dry. Doble's seventh win of the year gave him the championship lead from the still winless Gordon Macmillan, who spent the first race on the fringes of the top six and retired from the second after contact.

Four Mk1 MX-5 races produced a quartet of winners. The main championship honours were shared between points leader Fraser Fenwick and Steve Foden, although the latter won both on the road only to be stymied by a track-limits issue. Neil Chisnall and Declan McDonnell shone in wet and dry respectively in the Clubmans contests.

IAN SOWMAN

Simpson starred as other F355s had myriad maladies

STEVE JONES

Simpson avoids F355 woes to take Ferrari hat-trick

ANGLESEY
FOC
23-24 JULY

Despite the blustery and wet conditions, the racing spirit couldn't be dampened at the Ferrari Club Competizione meeting at the stunning Anglesey venue last weekend. This event, organised by the Ferrari Owners Club, featured a busy paddock with an impressive 37 cars for the Darlington and District Motor Club's Northern Saloon and Sports Car Championship alone.

The five F355 Challenges were favourites for the Pirelli Ferrari Formula Classic races, and ran fastest in qualifying but, with the notable exception of three-time winner Tristan Simpson, were plagued by bad luck thereafter. Wayne Marrs took pole for the opener and, on previous form, was expected to secure most of the silverware. He managed to convert this into a win in the first race after fending off Christopher Compton-Goddard and Simpson, but crank sensor problems then kept him out of the running.

Compton-Goddard's blue F355 always seemed in contention but a random electrical shutdown in race three denied him any chance of victory, then a damaged front-right corner forced his retirement during race four. Nicky Paul-Barron and Darren Mills's similar cars also suffered throughout the weekend and it therefore fell to James Cartwright in his 328 GTB to make the most of the opportunity, picking up a second, third and fourth as the faster cars fell by the wayside.

Woolfitt (r) and Cobb had close NSSCC fights

STEVE JONES

Invited guests, the DDMC, arguably provided the most dramatic spectacle during their first race on Saturday. The Spire GTR of Jon Woolfitt and Matty Cobb's 'VW Beetle' (in fact a carbonfibre-bodied silhouette racer on a Radical SR8 chassis) were in a class of their own, circulating seven seconds per lap quicker than anyone else. A titanic battle for the lead raged throughout, ahead of plenty of scrapping all the way down the order but, with only a minute to go, Cobb spun coming out of Peel. This left Woolfitt to cruise to victory with a 59s advantage, before doubling up in race two. Drew Myerscough completed the podium in his Caterham C400 each time.

The 15 Alfa Romeo entrants also provided their share of the action. George Osborne won both races in his modified 75 ahead of Thomas Hill's GT, but it was Andrew Bourke who stole the show. He managed to get his Twin Spark 156 all the way up to fifth after a heroic drive in their wet first race, putting him on the tail of the faster V6 competitors, despite being flagged off 10s after them from the split grid.

STEPHEN MOSLEY

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Hill on his way to the 1962 F1 crown at the South African GP

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Celebrating a British F1 pioneer

BOOK REVIEW
BRM – RACING FOR BRITAIN
Ian Wagstaff and Doug Nye
RRP £120

The BRM story is a fascinating and tumultuous one, the incredible lows offset by periods when it took on and beat the best in the world. It's 60 years since Britain's first proper Formula 1 team took both the drivers' and constructors' titles, and now seems as good a time as any to celebrate the achievements of the outfit from Bourne.

The Owen family, which still owns BRM, has started a number of projects to remind – or inform – people of the team's history. "Our view is very much that we are custodians of this very significant piece of British motorsport history," write Nick, Simon and Paul Owen – grandsons of key BRM figure Sir Alfred Owen, who bought the concern from the BRM Trust in 1952 – in the foreword for *BRM – Racing for Britain*. "We want to acknowledge and highlight just what was achieved by these remarkable people."

The Hall and Hall-built V16 chassis 4 and a BRM exhibition at the Silverstone Interactive Museum, not to mention a number of demonstrations at key motorsport events, are part of the 2022 celebrations. And so is this book.

Experienced automotive journalist Ian Wagstaff and BRM authority Doug Nye tell the story, from the ambitious V16 project led by Raymond Mays and designer Peter Berthon through the successful Graham Hill era during 1500cc F1 to the final decline in the mid-1970s under Louis Stanley.

There are some snippets and recollections from the Owen family, notably John Owen (son of Alfred), but largely it's the authors who take you through the story. This means that, with little quoted input from some of the key BRM figures still around (many of whom were consulted), there is little new here for those familiar with the subject material. As an overview, however, Wagstaff and Nye hit all the main elements and there's no doubting their credibility and authority.

Two big plus points for *BRM – Racing for Britain* are the fantastic images, many from the Owen archives, and reproduced documents that intersperse the main text throughout. The captions are extensive and detailed, while there are gems to be found in the archive material, which includes letters to and from leading drivers, period press articles and sponsorship proposals.

Much of the early part of the book deals with the complexities and struggles concerning the V16 project, not least of which was trying to get parts and materials from the array of British companies involved. It's famously a story of failure – only coming good after the formula for which it had been designed was obsolete – but it laid the groundwork for what was to come, and few would argue with the awesome sound and presence of the P15 on full song.

Understandably, the V8-engined P57 that took the 1962 title double gets significant space, though the Rover-BRM gas turbine project brings a welcome diversion. The final years with V12 power don't get such a look-in but the victories scored by Tony Southgate's P153 and sublime P160 are there.

This isn't a race-by-race account (an appendix with such information might have been a nice bonus) as much as it is a narrative following the rollercoaster ride season-by-season. For those wanting to know more, a bibliography could also have pointed readers in the right direction (we'd recommend *BRM* by Mays and Peter Roberts, first published in 1962).

Minor gripes aside, this book acts as a fine reminder that not only did BRM ultimately achieve its goal of winning the world championship, it also had a wider impact on British engineering and contributed to the rise of the United Kingdom as a motorsport superpower. And in that, the book must also be regarded as a success in meeting the Owen family's own aims.

KEVIN TURNER

John Owen and new V16 chassis 4

Hill talks with Alfred Owen and Stanley

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Hungarian Grand Prix
Formula 1 World Championship
Round 13/22
Hungaroring, Hungary
31 July
TV **Live**
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355
TV **Highlights**
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1800; Channel 4, Sun 1830

Formula E
Round 9/10
London, UK
30-31 July
TV **Live** Channel 4, Sat 1430, Sun 1430; Eurosport 2, Sat 1500, Sun 1500

IndyCar Series
Round 12/16
Indianapolis, USA
30 July
TV **Live**
Sky Sports F1, Sat 1830

FIA Formula 2
Round 10/14
Hungaroring, Hungary
30-31 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 1655, Sun 1030

FIA Formula 3
Round 6/9
Hungaroring, Hungary
30-31 July
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 0955, Sun 0900

W Series
Round 5/8
Hungaroring, Hungary
30 July
TV **Live**
Sky Sports F1, Sat 1315

Spa 24 Hours
Intercontinental GT Challenge
Round 2/4
Spa, Belgium
30-31 July

GT World Challenge Europe Endurance
Round 3/5
Spa, Belgium
30-31 July

Formula Regional Euro
Round 7/10
Spa, Belgium
29-30 July
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Fri 1245, Sat 1035

Australian Supercars
Round 8/13
The Bend, Australia
30-31 July
TV **Live**
BT Sport 2, Sat 0715; BT Sport 3, Sun 0345, Sun 0645

NASCAR Cup
Round 22/36
Indianapolis, USA
31 July
TV **Live**
Premier Sports 2, Sun 1900

NASCAR Xfinity
Round 20/33
Indianapolis, USA
30 July
TV **Live**
Premier Sports 2, Sat 0130

NASCAR Truck Series
Round 17/23
Indiana, USA
30 July
TV **Live**
Premier Sports 2, Sat 0130

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park HSCC
29-31 July
50s Sports Cars, Aurora Derek Bell Trophy, CSCC Special Saloons & Modsports, Gentleman Drivers, Guards Trophy, HGPCA Gold Cup, Historic F2, Historic Formula Junior, HRDC Jack Sears Trophy, Masters Pre-66 Touring Cars, VSCC (Egerton Cup, Range Corner Trophy)

Knockhill BARC
30-31 July
BTCC, British F4, Ginetta GT4 Supercup, Ginetta Junior, Mini Challenge, Porsche Carrera Cup
TV **Live**
ITV, Sun 1200; ITV4, Sun 1455

Kirkistown 500MRCI
30 July
Fiesta Zetec, Formula Sheane, Historics, Mazda MX-5s, NI FF1600, Roadsports/Se7ens/Strykers, Saloon/GT/ITCC, Superkarts

Silverstone MSVR
30-31 July
911 Challenge, GB3, GB4, GT Cup, Monoposto, Porsche Club, Radical Challenge, Radical SR1 Cup, Toyo Tyres Race Series
Livestream via gb-3.net

Snetterton 750MC
30-31 July
750 Formula, CALM All Porsche, Classic Stock Hatch, Club Enduro, Formula Vee, Historic 750 Formula, Locost, Toyota MR2, Roadsports, Sport Specials
Livestream via 750mc.co.uk

British Hillclimb Championship
Round 10/13
Wiscombe Park, England
30-31 July

AUTOSPORT F1 AND MOTORSPORT

autosport.com/podcast

F1 French GP review
Max Verstappen profited from Charles Leclerc's crash to ease to victory at the French Grand Prix and cement his lead in the Formula 1 world championship standings. Host Martyn Lee is joined by Luke Smith in France, plus Jess McFadyen and Matt Kew, to review the race at Paul Ricard, and ask if we were denied a title fight at the front.

Hungarian Grand Prix

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TOP FIVE

AUTOSPORT F1 AND MOTORSPORT
Look out for our new series of **Top 10 podcasts**, including the top 10 Minardi F1 drivers, in August.
autosport.com/podcast

SCHLEGELMILCH

MINARDI FORMULA 1 DRIVERS

The low-budget Italian team ran almost as many drivers (37) as it scored points (38) during its 20-year run, but it unearthed a few gems who made full use of the machinery available to them

JAMES NEWBOLD

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

5 JARNO TRULLI

Trulli forged his reputation for qualifying scalps during an impactful seven-race spell in 1997. The rookie habitually upstaged faster machinery in the year's slowest car (the Lola not included), and never qualified on the back row. Only beaten once by team-mate Ukyo Katayama before his Prost call-up to replace the injured Olivier Panis, he beat both Tyrrells and Shinji Nakano's Prost in the Brazilian GP.

COLOMBO

4 CHRISTIAN FITTIPALDI

It's a shame that his Minardi career is best remembered for his Monza 1993 backflip, because Fittipaldi was a prolific points-scorer with the team when that wasn't a cert. His 1992 rookie campaign was wrecked by a neck injury after a Magny-Cours crash, but he raced Jean Alesi's Ferrari hard for sixth at Suzuka. Two top-fives followed in a strong 1993 as he matched the team's best finish, fourth, at Kyalami.

3 MARK WEBBER

Fifth on debut in Australia, defying Mika Salo's Toyota, was the most high-profile moment of Mark Webber's single Minardi season in 2002 and summed up a year in which he usually achieved the maximum result. Never beaten in qualifying by team-mates Alex Yoong and Anthony Davidson, Webber also inflicted regular pain on future employer Jaguar. His Magny-Cours race was top drawer, but you had to look hard to see it.

2 FERNANDO ALONSO

At a crucial point in Minardi's history, following its takeover by Paul Stoddart, Fernando Alonso was just the talisman it needed. Only force majeure cost him a 100% qualifying head-to-head against Tarso Marques and he three times conquered both Benettons and Arrows. After besting Jacques Villeneuve's BAR to 17th on the grid at Indianapolis, he produced a masterful drive to finish an unheralded 11th at Suzuka.

ROSE

1 PIERLUIGI MARTINI

Minardi's original Formula 1 driver, Pierluigi Martini comes top by every metric. Its most prolific racer (with 92 starts across three separate spells between 1985 and 1995), he scored its first point (Detroit 1988), tallied more points than anyone else (16), led its only race lap (Estoril 1989) and secured its only front row start (Phoenix 1990). He has its best grid average (16.5) and surpassed numerous respected team-mates.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Pedro Rodriguez trudges back to the pits after parking his BRM P153, which had suffered ignition failure after just seven laps of the 1970 German Grand Prix, held for the first time at Hockenheim. Meanwhile, the attention of the photographer behind him is focused on the #21 Brabham BT33 of Rolf Stommelen and Emerson Fittipaldi's #17 Lotus 49C. Come the chequered flag, the Brazilian Formula 1 rookie had gained the advantage, finishing ahead of the German in fourth place. Jochen Rindt (Lotus 72) won the race, his final F1 victory before his death a month later at Monza.

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INSET: BRECHT DECANCQ PHOTOGRAPHY

Spa-Francorchamps is so important in my motor racing story – I have so many great souvenirs from there. My father raced, but Spa is really where I started watching races. My grandparents had a big house in the town, and when I visited, I'd go to the track to see the cars on the old 14km (8.7-mile) track with my grandfather. We'd watch at Burnenville, Malmedy, the Masta Kink, all those crazy places.

My first strong memory is from the Spa 24 Hours some time in the mid-1960s when I was maybe five or six. I remember looking up at the winners' rostrum after the race and thinking, 'Wouldn't it be amazing if one day I could be up there?'.

All those years later when I took the first of my four victories in the 24 Hours in 1983, I was up on that same podium. I looked out at the crowd – in those days the race used to get 100,000 spectators – and wondered if there was a little kid down there thinking the same as I'd done all those years before.

That victory in 1983, at such a young age with the Juma BMW, was so important in my career. I went from being an unknown to the front pages of the newspapers in Belgium. I had been doing Formula 2 that year, but I had to stop because a sponsor hadn't paid. The win helped me so much in single-seaters.

When I talk about Spa being my favourite, I mean the seven-kilometre circuit as it was in the 1980s and 1990s when I raced on it, with the barriers right up to the edge of the circuit. Eau Rouge was tighter then, more of a left and a right, but Blanchimont was the best. It wasn't flat in a touring car and you had the Armco maybe three or four metres away. Spa was a much bigger challenge back then.

I never raced on the old, long circuit because I started my career in England – the best school for a racing driver. But it would have been great to do it because it had so many fantastic corners.

Thierry Tassin was speaking to Gary Watkins

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